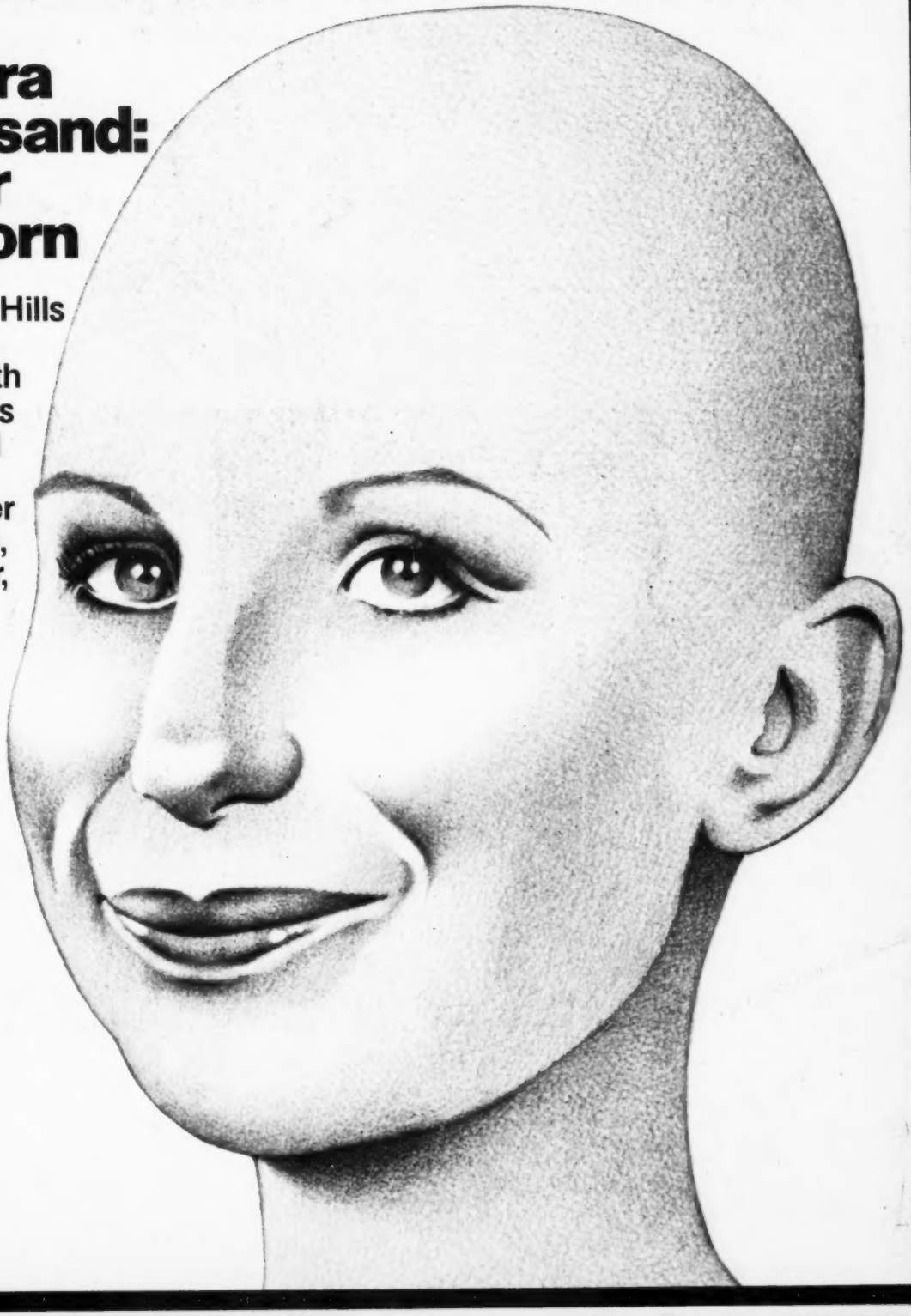
JANUARY 24, 1975/75 CENTS

THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE

NEW TIMES

Barbra Streisand: a star is shorn

A Beverly Hills hairstylist started with Streisand's head–and is now taking over her image, her career, and her newest movie.



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EVE QUELER

HOME: New York, N.Y.

AGE: 37

PROFESSION: Conductor

HOBBIES: Playing the piano; attending concerts.

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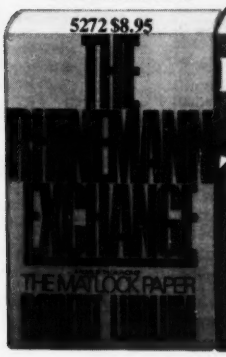

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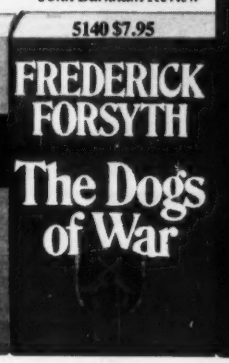

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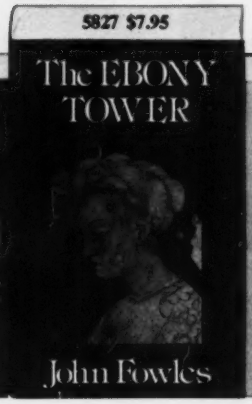

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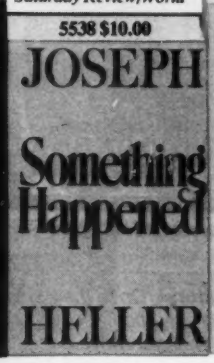

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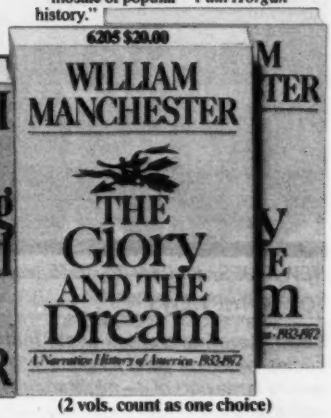

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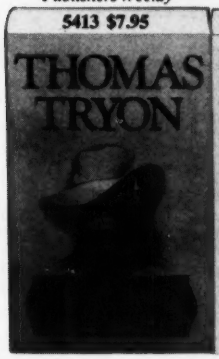

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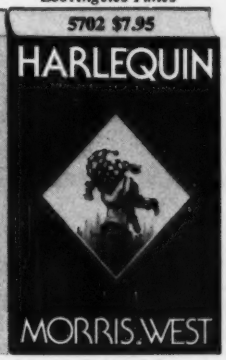

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NEW TIMES, January 24, 1975, Volume 4 Number 2

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South Carolina's silent death factory *Once the Barnwell nuclear waste depository goes into operation, the world—or at least a large part of it—might truly end, not with a bang, but a whimper* **By Amanda Spake** 20

On taking a bath *As the depression takes hold, more and more Americans are discovering that going bankrupt is not the end of the world—but a nifty way out of trouble* **By James Dwyer** 26

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Collision on "Rainbow Road" *When Barbra Streisand, a multinational showbiz corporation, had a wig cut by Jon Peters, a Beverly Hills hairdresser, love blossomed. So did Peters, who took over Barbra's life and then took over her next film,* Rainbow Road, *a $5 million remake of* A Star Is Born *that has become Hollywood's biggest joke* **By Marie Brenner** 48

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON

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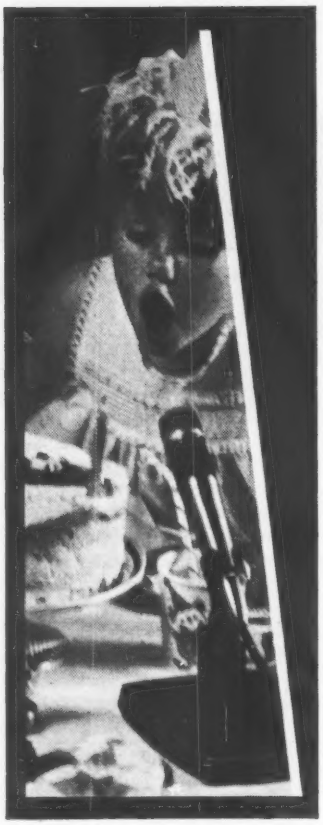
BEHIND THE SCENES

This column is usually devoted strictly to editorial matters—a free-lance writer we are introducing, a columnist or regular contributor we are welcoming. But *New Times*, you may have noticed, is also a highly graphic magazine and perhaps it is time we said a few words about that other half of our "product." Several of our covers, in particular breadlines at McDonald's and Wilbur Mills' blue angel, have drawn as much comment from readers as the stories they illustrated. (One reader has even framed his breadlines cover.) Last fall, our cover on Muhammad Ali (September 6, 1974) was selected by *Art Direction* magazine as one of its "Best of '74"; before the year is out, a book of Watergate illustrations, published by Rolling Stone–Straight Arrow, will include a half-dozen illustrations from our pages.

The man responsible for all this is the slightly dour-looking fellow in the photograph at the top of the page—Art Director Steve Phillips, 29. The recipient of no less than 50 awards, including two Gold Medals from "The One Show" in 1974, Steve has no good reason to look glum, except that he often wonders whether anyone inside the magazine, let alone anyone on the outside, really appreciates the problems inherent in trying to orchestrate the graphics for a biweekly feature news magazine. Unlike *Time* and *Newsweek*, which rely almost exclusively on black and white photographs, *New Times* uses many four-color illustrations—a fact that seriously compounds the problem of deadlines.

This issue is a case in point. Because of a last-minute change in cover stories, Steve had exactly one day to come up with an appropriate cover for our Arts story on Barbra Streisand and her hairdresser-lover. The idea Steve and the editor decided upon—a bald Streisand—could hardly have been photographed, or at least not without a week for retouching. And an illustration, with only a day to execute it (most illustrators need at least a week), seemed a highly risky proposition. Several people in the office objected to the idea on the basis that it could not be carried out: Barbra bald would not look like Barbra. But Steve persisted, and called upon *New Times*' most frequent contributor, Bill Nelson, to fly up from his home in Richmond, Virginia. With Abbott and Costello blasting away from the television set, the two Phillips children running a Christmas train set under his legs, and Steve feeding him bagels and advice, Nelson set to work in the Phillips' living room, using his knees for an easel and a handful of studio photographs for guidance. Twenty-four hours later, Steve walked into the office with the finished cover—just 40 minutes before it had to be sent off for processing. "It could have been a fiasco," he admitted after the office roundly applauded the finished product. "There are only two or three female faces in the world you could shave bald and still recognize, and Streisand's happens to be one." Steve, cheer up.

George A. Hirsch



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LETTERS

The Wadd and Ward

I'm a charter subscriber, have every issue. I dig your magazine, our magazine, *New Times*. In that context, I wish this letter to be known. "The Eddie Haskell Show" in the December 27 issue was interesting, but it bothered me. It hit a note that I find and have found in the culture of the '60s and '70s—the glorification of negativism. Isn't it awful and sad to get off on a hero that you hope is the ultimate gross-out of a Johnny Porno Holmes? Where does that put your head?

New Times often talks about the lack of insight, lack of leaders, lack of morals in these United States. I revel in your gadfly attacks on the ten dumbest congressmen, in your fervor at "nuke" busting, in your revealing the plantation in the Supreme Court. But I want to go somewhere with you after we rake the muck. And I don't want to go to Eddie Haskell AKA "the Wadd" AKA Alice Cooper.

O.K.? So bring out the side trips of Leif Brush and the Earth Philharmonic and the wanderings of Billy Gray's Bud Anderson (Billy Budd?) but please, leave out the Devil Dance.

Francie Fellingham Letter
Barre, Vermont

Eddie Haskell was great, mocking Ward and June with their own aerosol-cream visions. And maybe Ward wasn't too bright. But just like Wally and Beaver, he was a victim of that goddamn whining wife. (Remember? "Warrrrd, now Warrrrd." "Oh, all right June.") And although I have to stand with Eddie when the sides line up (since bad things happen when your nuts take over your brain, as Billy Gray said, and Ward will stand with June), Ward was an okay guy.

T. St. Laurent
Chester, New Jersey

Unfeeling

I cannot believe Fanne Foxe would be so fame-hungry or so dumb to pose on your cover, à la *The Blue Angel*, and still call Wilbur Mills a friend ("Wilbur's blue angel," December 27). If indeed stupidity is the cause of such callousness, I furthermore cannot believe *New Times* would be so unscrupulous and unfeeling as to carry Marshall Frady's analogy to this almost unbearable point. No respect at all was shown for the long and distinguished career of a man who is only too human.

Lynne Warren
Chicago, Illinois

New Age

As a free-lance writer who has spent "time in the fields," I must applaud Laura Parker for her fantastic article "Van Camp's Ladies of the Night" (December 13). The article conveys the mood and surroundings under which she and other women have labored more perfectly than any other article I've read in months. It is a tribute to her sex and *New Times* that her piece was published. Who says "inexperienced college kids" can't produce top-notch work? I hope that *New Times* continues to encourage new talent, regardless of age.

Will Hertzberg
Los Angeles, Calif.

Thank you, Laura Parker. You wrote so precisely of the cannery that you evoked in me memories I thought were buried and long gone. The summer before going away to college, I desperately needed a job and was elated when a cannery in Green Bay, Wisconsin, hired me. Even the 3:00 p.m. till midnight shift didn't bother me; the money was good.

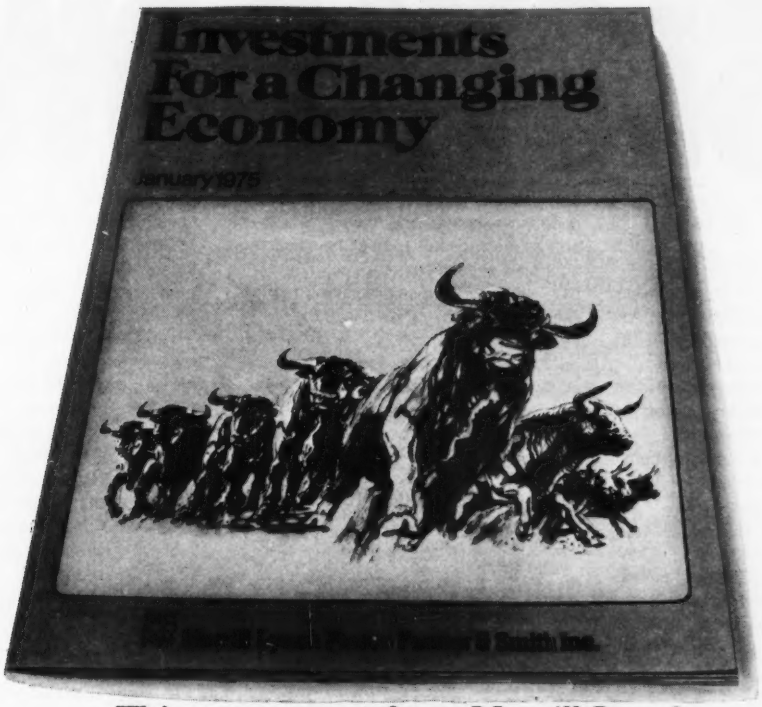
I lasted one night. I was assigned to picking "garbage" off a conveyer belt of green beans. Among my awful memories are the stench, the noise and the other women, whom I remember as all being fat. Worst of all was the utter boredom that overwhelmed me.

I would have gone mad had I worked a second night. I wonder why there cannot be a more humane way.

Barbara F. Luebke
Columbia, Missouri

Correction: In Deborah Larned's article on the current hysterilization epidemic (Dec. 27), the death rate for tubal ligation operations was given at 18 percent. That is obviously wildly high and was, in fact, a misprint which should have contained a decimal: .18 percent.

Just published.



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What will '75 be like?

SLOW DOWN

By James S. Kunen

At first I thought it was me (I).

An undiagnosed bout of melancholia perhaps, or subclinical dyspepsia, might account for my burgeoning lack of interest in current affairs.

But then I noticed the same syndrome in others: it starts with a little absenteeism in front of the tube at Cronk times, and progresses rapidly to entire Sundays spent without so much as a riffle through the *Times*.

What's going on? I wondered.

Slowly, slowly it dawned on me: *Nothing*. Nothing's going on. There just isn't any news anymore. Only ads. Newsmen take bennies by the handful just to stay awake. They're laying off current events teachers in droves.

Take a look at the culture (if you can keep your eyes open). *Time* magazine's Modern Living section made the cover a few weeks ago. Know what was on it? A beagle. This is what's going on in America: people have a lot of pets. Stop the presses!!

On to the New York *Times*—the "newspaper of record." Everything that's happening has to be in the New York *Times*— it's a law. Turn to the Family/Style section— spotlight on the way we live. What's there? Some new rage? Some new fad? Some new idea? Here's the scoop: "Day Care Is the Norm in the Soviet Union." Oh wow! And check this out: "Home Economics Moves Out of the Kitchen." I'm telling you, these kids today!

But there's always Rock and Roll, you say?

That's just it. There's *always* Rock and Roll. There's already *been* Rock and Roll.

You know what else bores me? Jacques Cousteau. I used to *like* Jacques Cousteau. But now everything on TV bores me. Even football. I'll say it right out: I didn't give a damn who won the Super Bowl.

Well, you figure maybe the culture's *resting*. Maybe politics is where it's at. Sure.

"Bored with Ford"—there's a slogan for you. That guy is just such a dip. And the men he surrounds himself with! There's only one lively character in the whole Administration, what's-his-name, Putz, the agriculture secretary—he's often good for a laugh. But then you've got Rockefeller, man of the hour, after hour, after hour: powerful, destructive, boring. And Rhymin' Simon—he puts so many people to sleep he should be a controlled substance.

It's not just the politicians. The news itself rolls in each day like a fetid fog, obscuring everything.

Oh, occasionally something comes along that piques my curiosity. I was interested in Champagne Wilbur's antics—briefly. But when in a completely boring decade *one* interesting person pops up, it's only natural everybody's going to put their spotlights on him—and vaporize him in the heat. The only way to stay interesting is to go underground, like Patty. (If Rock and Roll weren't dead, there'd be some tough tunes about Patty.)

But the stock market is your more typical news story. It's always down. But it's never out. Everything's like that—intimations of tragedy, but never the denouement. Like the Middle East. The oil producing nations in particular, and the United Nations in general, bore me to death.

Get hold of yourself, Jim, my conscience says to me. You've got to care. It's your *job* to care. You're supposed to keep 'em caring. If nothing else, this don't-give-a-damn attitude is bad for the news business—a lot of people with families to support. . . .

Back to the New York *Times*. See what the pro columnists are caring about:

"Tom Wicker discusses House procedure reform." "James Reston views Kissinger's problems."

Hey, I got my own problems.

The other morning I was looking out my window—you never know what you might see through the windows across the way—and I saw it, there it was, bare ass. At last. (I've lived in the city six years.) And you know, it was lovely, but *so what*?

That's what the news is like—ass through glass. It may grab your attention, but what are you going to *do* with it?

Really though I think reading the paper is more like stepping in dog shit than anything else. There's nothing to be gained from it. You step in dog shit—you don't look down at your foot and say, "Well, I'll never do *that* again."

It's the same with the news. It doesn't *lead* anywhere. Either it's untrue, as with official pronouncements, or it's a non-dialectical, disconnected phenomenon, like a plane crash. You're sorry when a plane crashes; you're glad you weren't on it; but you know that planes have crashed before, and that planes will crash again. Each crash brings you no closer to the Last One, to Resolution.

That's what we hunger for, confrontation and Resolution, just as in the old days, instead of this interminable teetering at the brink—all of life a stopgap measure. Alas, it takes a lot of vital energy to confront and resolve, and we seem simply spent.

It would be a perfect time for the Russkis or ChiComs to move in on us, but they're bored, too.

Don't worry. Things will jump again. Nothing can't last forever. From all I hear, these periods of decay are cyclical, and even necessary to clear the way for new life. Who knows? You could be the seed. ●

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSEPH SMITH

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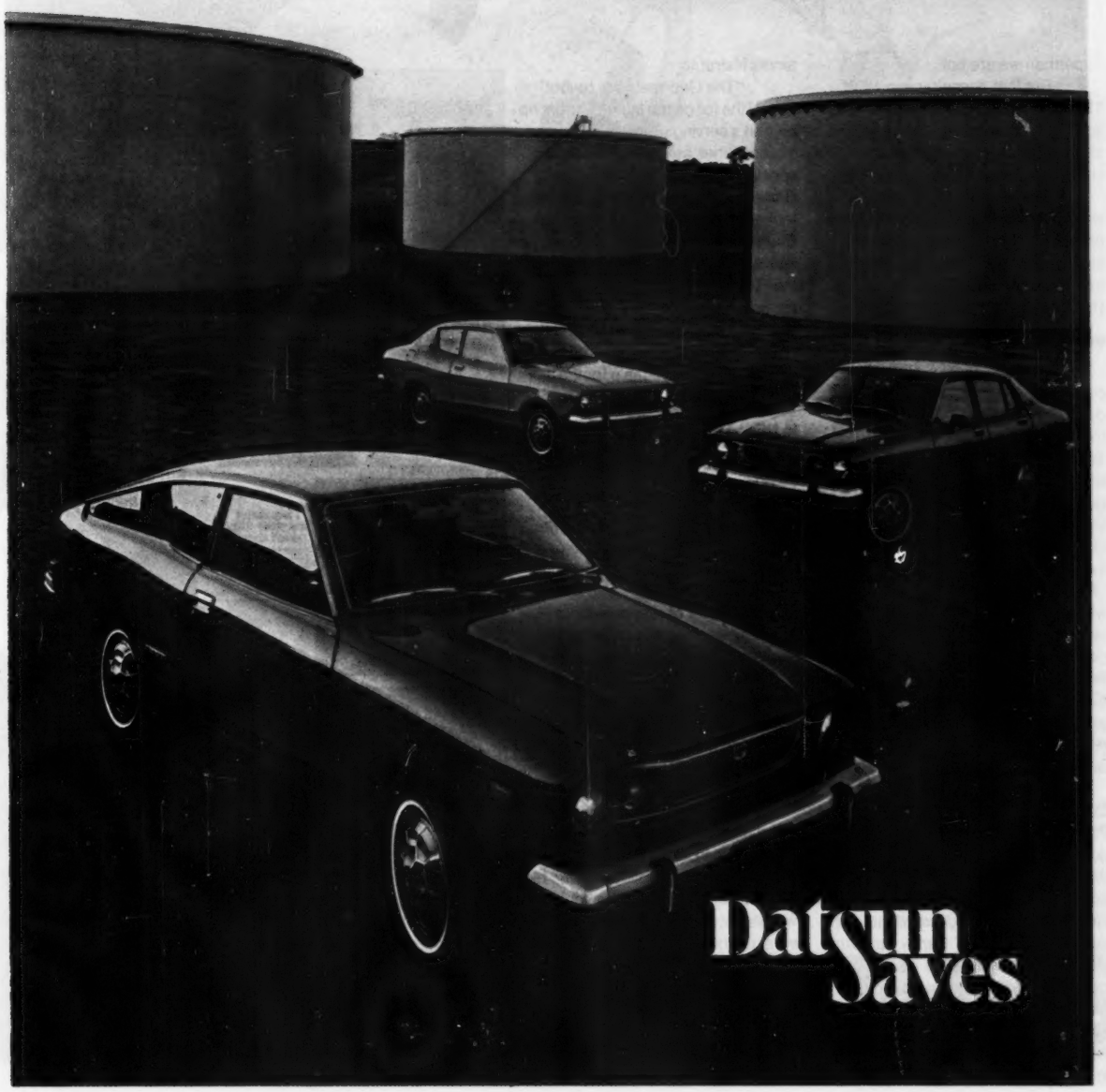

New Times. Think of us as the Mighty Mouse of magazines.

Superman we are not.

But that doesn't mean NEW TIMES isn't busting evil in the chops, fighting for the little guy, stripping the pants off phonies and generally shaking hell out of the establishment.

Like Mighty Mouse, we are small but powerful feisty. Out of all proportion to size, we make waves. Strike fear in evil hearts. Give the tremble to fat cats. Shake the rafters. The Mouse that Roars, that's us.

Some recent roars.

Every two weeks, NEW TIMES comes along with a stick or two of dynamite in its fist.

There was our story on "The Ten Dumbest Congressmen," with NEW TIMES' nomination for King of Dumb. You should have heard the screams on that one, including a well-attended press conference called by the King himself. There was "Prescription Payola," about doctors who are willing to risk your life for a color TV. There was "Southie Is My Home Town," a look at the people of South Boston you didn't find in any of the other media. (After a century of getting the shaft, maybe they had reasons for coming off as brawling racists.)

In "The Little Camera That Couldn't," NEW TIMES dissected Polaroid's SX-70, as a symbol of a consumer economy gone wild. In "A Wallace Is a Wallace Is a Wallace," we looked underneath the new moderate George and found—guess what—the same old George. In "Happy Days Are Here Again," we saw the new depression as upbeat—a chance for new lifestyles and the whole Whole Earth thing. In "Zen and the Art of the Perfect Backhand," we told you how to trust your body and ignore your old tennis instructor.

"The Gourmet Freeze-Out" ripped the foil off the big restaurant rip-off that's serving up mass-produced frozen dishes as expensive house specialties. "The Consulting Con Game" laid bare a cushy professorial racket. "They Shoot Ten-Year Olds, Don't They?" was a heartwarming look at New York's shootin' cops with their 007 license to kill just about anybody they want to. "That Championship Season" stripped the cover-up from the sex scandal that decimated Notre Dame's football team.

Is NEW TIMES mad all the time?

Golly, no. Don't get the idea we do nothing but dredge up embarrassing facts and tweak important noses. NEW TIMES is *the magazine of what's happening* and that's a spectrum that includes love and music and lifestyles and movies and all manner of rare new ideas. For instance, we reported on Erhard Seminars Training (est), one of the most fascinating of the new life therapies. We got inside the world of bisexuality. We published our *own* medical research on pot—"Attention: Smoking Grass May Be Good for Your Health."

And of course we continue to report on the eternal battle of The Little Guys vs. The Big Guys. Like the story on Sam Lovejoy, who toppled the big bad nuclear tower. And the young hillbillies of Mendocino County who were damned if they'd let their houses be torn down for lack of city plumbing.

Our bright, brash, talented writers and columnists—like Robert Sam Anson, Jesse Kornbluth, Marcia Seligson, Larry King, Amanda Spake, Jim Kunen, Mark Goodman, Frank

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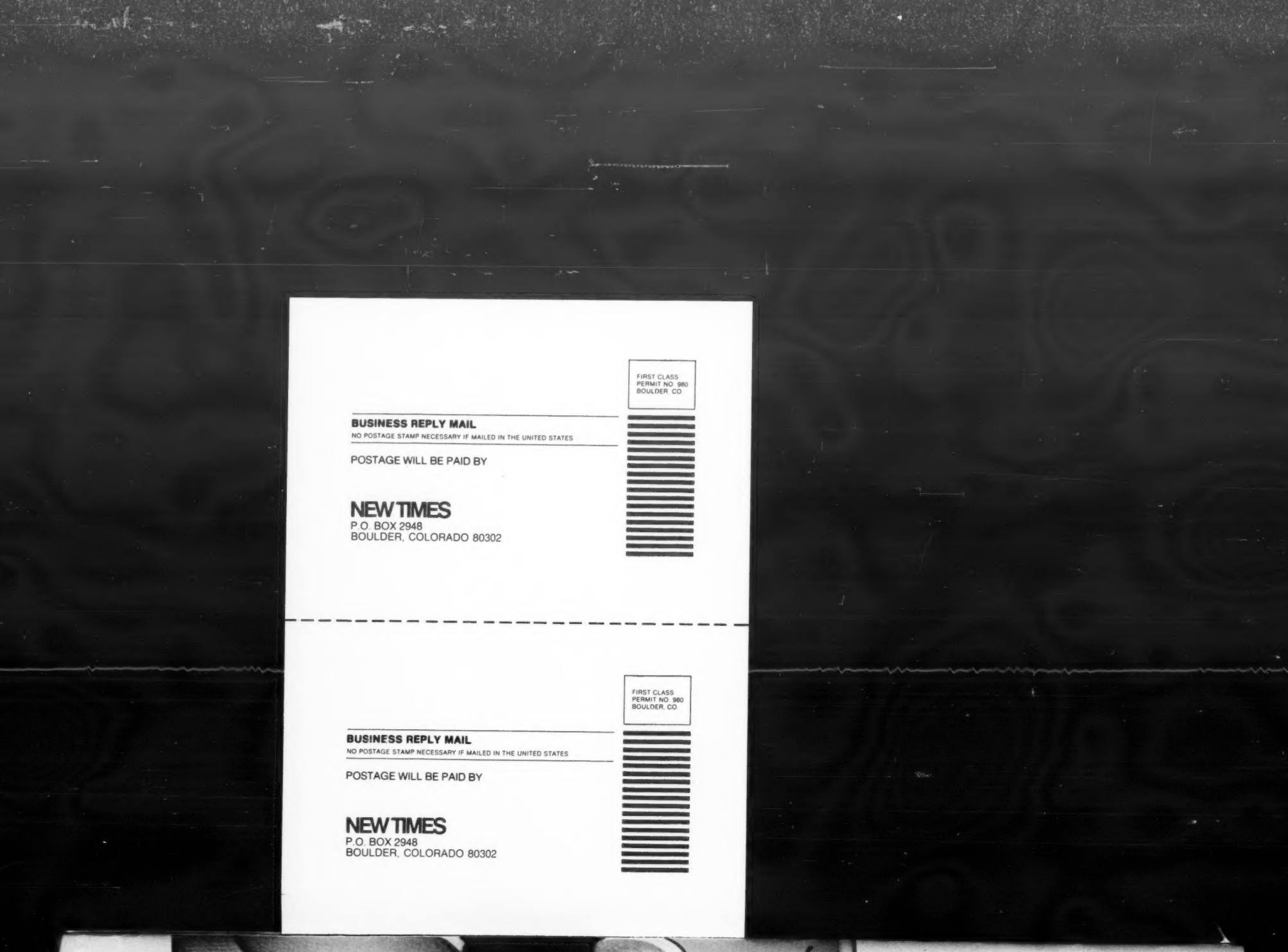
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Rich, Janet Maslin and Nina Totenberg—have one thing in common. They're unafraid. They'll plunge into anything, take chances and stands, crawl way out on limbs. Sure, NEW TIMES may fall on its face sometimes. But never on its knees!

We're plugged into *now*.

Whether you like it or not, you're living in a time of shattering transitions. Nobody knows where the world is heading and if they claim to, they lie!

NEW TIMES—more than any other magazine on the American scene, we think—is plugged into this difficult, exhilarating age. Do we understand what's going on? Sometimes, but not often enough. Do we know The Answers? Hell, we consider ourselves lucky when we know The Questions.

But we don't lie. We don't pretend impossible knowledge. Our minds and eyes are open and our promise to you is firm: we'll pin as much of the truth to the page as we know how.

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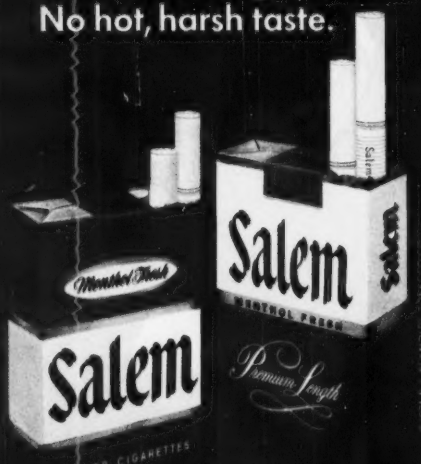

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FULMINATIONS

By Larry L. King

If you ordered an investigation to find out what's wrong with football, would you select for your determined sleuths a panel composed of Bear Bryant, George Allen, Woody Hayes, Gerald R. Ford, Bart Starr, Dan Jenkins, Howard Cosell and any given president of Notre Dame? You would not, I think, unless you coveted a final committee report saying that football needs more enthusiastic paying spectators, bigger and faster players, a fifth down for the offense and referees who are selective in their penalty decisions.

Though the above-named gentlemen may be Great Americans, and possibly two or three of them are about half-likable—well, anyway, Dan Jenkins is—you would not normally expect them to ordain that football has nose warts, body odor or excessive brutal moments. This is true simply because these men are of and from the game itself. Nor, I think, would you select Billy Graham to ferret out malfeasance among Southern Baptists. Yet it appears that President Winkin' Blinkin' Nod has so performed in naming his blue-ribbon commission to look into the alleged wrongs of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Vice-President Rockefeller, head of the commission, has for five years been a member of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board; how likely is he to discover that he's been flubbing his job all these years? General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (and once Supreme Allied Commander in Europe), cannot but help having CIA secrets in his head. Is he gonna spill 'em? C. Douglas Dillon is a striped-pants Republican, former treasury secretary, and now chairs the board of a Wall Street banking house. When you think of the Eastern Establishment, who pops into your mind quicker than ole C. Douglas hisself? The late Allen Dulles, maybe? His brother Foster? Richard Helms, you say?

Another blue-ribboner is Erwin Griswold, U.S. solicitor general under LBJ (who encouraged illegal CIA operations on the home front) *and* Nixon, in whose behalf he argued to the Supreme Court that the Army's domestic spying on civilians "does not violate a statute or the Constitution."

In addition to these "Old Boys," loyal to the end to whatever governmental master they serve, how do you enjoy knowing that sitting on this commission is the immediate past governor of California, one Ronnie

Reagan? What the blue-ribboners must determine, really, is just how fast and loose the CIA has played with our civil liberties in its illegal domestic operations. So is Ronnie Reagan your idea of a civil libertarian? It was Reagan who fought the Free Speech movement at Berkeley. It was Reagan who, seeing Reds under every Hollywood bed during the McCarthy Era, finked on his old screen pals to the House Un-American Activities Committee.

As for that rock-headed fella heading the commission, where is his heart when it comes to basic civil liberties? Well, he pushed a stop-and-frisk law through in New York. Ole Rocky also cheered the Nixon-Mitchell "no-knock entry" law. At a time when other governors were downgrading pot penalties, jolly ole Nelse obtained the nation's toughest drug law—including harsh penalties for such soft drugs as marijua-hoo-hoo.

How does Rocky feel about the CIA? One may only surmise from the record. He's apparently found nothing to disturb him after being a part of the intelligence-reviewing apparatus for five years. He was upset when JFK failed to provide air cover at the Bay of Pigs, as the CIA urged. He greeted his appointment as head of this new investigative commission with the thought that his job is "to restore public confidence without damaging a very important organ of national security—the CIA." Gee whiz, fellow Americans, I can hardly wait to read that report and have my confidence restored.

Perhaps, however, we should worry about more immediate problems. Our twinkly secretary of state recently has semi-promised U.S. military intervention against Middle East oil producers should they "threaten strangulation of the industrialized world."

Given that particular pronouncement of statesmanship, I'd guess that we could use a little confidence-restoring, all righty. Here we are, witnesses to World War II, Korea and Vietnam in the same lifetime and with the dawning realization that war has become a national habit! We know, too, that President Winkin' Blinkin' Nod has but two ears—one into which Dr. Strangelove whispers, while Rocky burbles into the other. So perhaps we should try to be gladdened by the prospect of the blue-ribboners taking it easy on the CIA: given the rapidity with which things are coming unglued, we may require the foreign services of our spies quicker than we would prefer. ●

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE PHILLIPS

Goldwater fights the Indians

THE INSIDER

POWER POLITICS

The long arm of John Connally

Now that Mssrs. Mitchell, Mardian, Haldeman and Ehrlichman have had their 80 days in court, the biggest Nixon enchilada awaiting justice is the former secretary of the treasury, John Connally, charged with taking $10,000 from the milk producers and then lying about it.

Big Bad John, however, may not be easy to nail. The government's star witness against the resourceful Connally is one Jake Jacobsen: milk lobbyist, old Connally pal and LBJ intimate. Jacobsen reportedly told federal investigators that he acted as middleman in passing the ten thou on to Connally. He made it perfectly clear, however, that his cooperation in court would depend on the dropping of all charges—federal and state—against him. The Feds agreed. But the state of Texas is refusing to drop charges against Jacobsen in connection with a bank scandal there.

Those who are suspicious note that Connally, a former governor of Texas, retains many high-placed friends in his native state, among them prosecutors, judges and other officials who might have a say in the disposition of Jacobsen's case. As things stand, should Jacobsen cooperate with the Feds and help convict Connally, he would face trial in a state where Big John remains a real power. What Jacobsen will decide to do, no one yet knows—but if he recants in the Connally matter, the prosecution may have a thin case indeed.

Connally: still has friends in high places

Krogh: the prodigal visitor

Still not a crook

Last summer after he resigned, Richard Nixon had a notorious visitor at his San Clemente compound. Egil Krogh, who had earlier pleaded guilty in the Plumbers case and served a six month jail sentence, happened to be in California, so he called Nixon, who invited him over. Krogh, who has become something of an evangelist about confessing to one's crimes, says he told Nixon how much better he had felt after 'fessing up. Nixon's reply: "Well, I'm glad it worked out well for *you*."

Goldwater on the warpath

Barry Goldwater has set off a ruckus in his native Arizona with the charge that organized labor bought Apache and Navajo votes for the Democrats in last November's election. Goldwater himself, who won reelection by over 90,000 votes, lost the Indian vote nine to one. The price, said the senator, "was a dollar a vote, twelve cents a mile and beer."

Three days after the press conference during which Goldwater made the charge, Navajo Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald held a conference of his own to say that the accusation was "an insult to every Navajo who exercised the right of a citizen to vote." MacDonald noted that the tribe had appropriated $50,000 in May 1974 for a voter registration drive—a fact that he said explains the unusually high Navajo turnout in November of 57 percent. "I think," said MacDonald, "he's still thinking of the days of cowboys and Indians. The American Indian people, especially the Navajos in the state of Arizona, have really begun to participate in the election process."

Representatives of labor reacted even more angrily than MacDonald to Goldwater's charges. "Without question," said Arizona's AFL-CIO spokesman, Darwin Aycock, "he's a liar."

But apparently not everyone is convinced. At Goldwater's behest, the Justice Department has taken an

Goldwater: whooping it up in happier days

interest in the case. "There is enough there to indicate there ought to be an investigation," says U.S. Attorney William C. Smitherman in his best federalese, "and the investigation is continuing."

Is Buzhardt next?

J. Fred Buzhardt, the onetime Nixon lawyer who had a heart attack while fighting the tapes case in the courts, is reportedly close to indictment. The special prosecutor's office is investigating Buzhardt as the principal villain in connection with the deliberately misleading editing of White House tape transcripts turned over to the House Judiciary Committee during its impeachment investigation. The charge being considered against Buzhardt is obstruction of a congressional investigation. Prosecutors have not made a final

Buzhardt: indictment due?

decision on the indictment because of problems they see in prosecuting such a criminal case. As one prosecutor put it: "The pardon is a much greater problem here than in other cases. Here's a guy who did something for the chief, at the chief's orders, and for the protection of the chief, not for his own self-protection."

Douglas hanging in there

Friends of Justice William O. Douglas vehemently deny that he will use his recent stroke, which was relatively mild, as an excuse to retire. "Never," commented one associate. "I assure you he won't give Jerry Ford (who once tried to have him impeached) the chance to appoint another conservative justice."

In light of the President's history of antagonism toward Douglas, White House sources are being extremely circumspect about the justice's illness. The Administration has for the moment put a lid on suggestions of possible Douglas replacements.

If and when a vacancy does open on the court, however, insiders expect a battle between a pair of White House aides, moderate Donald Rumsfeld and conservative Bob Hartmann, over who should receive the appointment. Speculation is that Rumsfeld will leak his candidates through the New York *Times*, and Hartmann's names will pop up in Evans' and Novak's column.

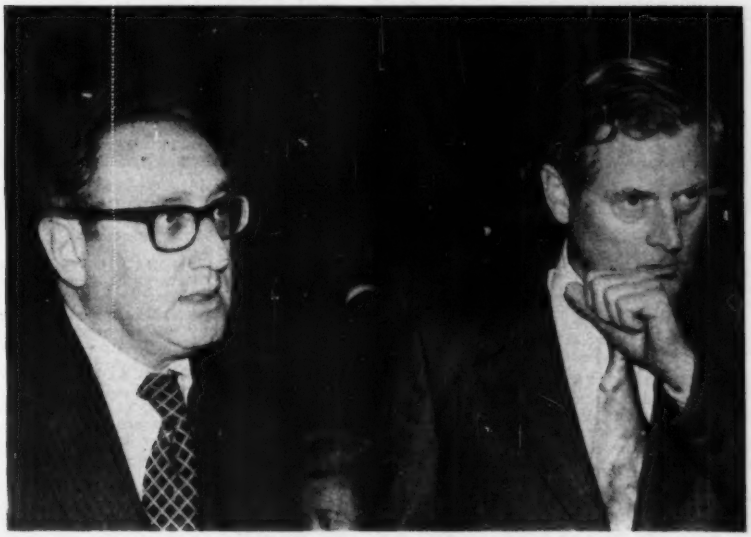
Kissinger no diplomat with his aides

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is once again having problems holding onto key staffers. Kissinger has always been a hard man to work for and his staff turnover has been abnormally high for Washington. Latest to go is former Virginia Governor Linwood Holton, who spent the past year as Kissinger's congressional liaison. Part of the reason for Holton's departure is financial, but much of it stems from Kissinger's refusal to confide in his staffers on key issues and the secretary of state's general disdain for the Congress. "Henry doesn't believe Congress needs to know very much," says a State Department staffer. "Holton would find out things when they appeared in the *Post*. Then he would have to take the flak from congressmen who figured they should know before the *Post*. It made his job impossible."

Douglas: Never!

Hugh Scott and Friends

A major political scandal that could possibly involve Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania will shortly reach the indictment stage, according to sources at the Justice Department and the General Services Administration. The scandal, which has been under investigation for more than a year, involves the awarding of a $46 million government lease to a Philadelphia developer who is a close friend of Scott's. The developer, Mathew Weinstein, was awarded the lease despite lower bids by other realtors and the filing of a bid which did not meet legal requirements. There is said to be evidence that key documents were backdated in order to make Weinstein eligible for the contract. Weinstein is a campaign contributor as well as a friend of Scott's, and the lawyer who negotiated the contract, Herbert Fogel of Philadelphia, was treasurer of Scott's 1970 fund-raising committee. While suggesting that the probe was not



Kissinger and Holton: a parting of the ways

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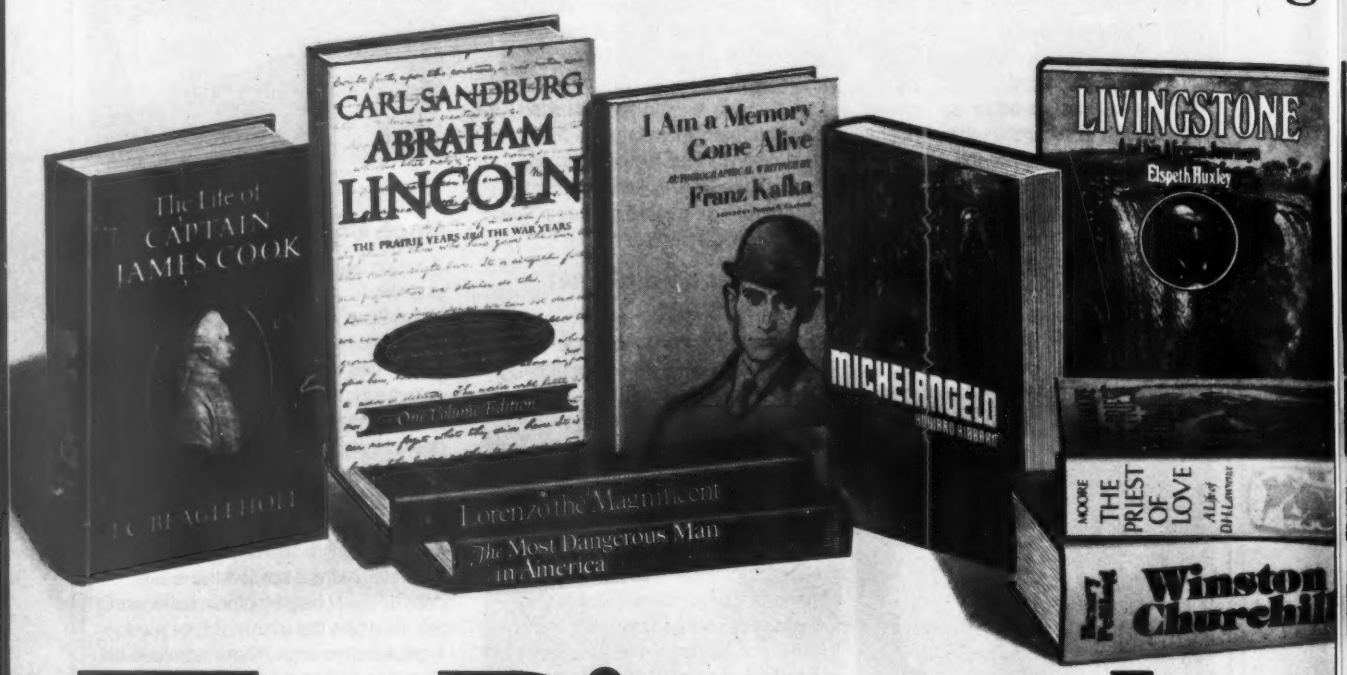

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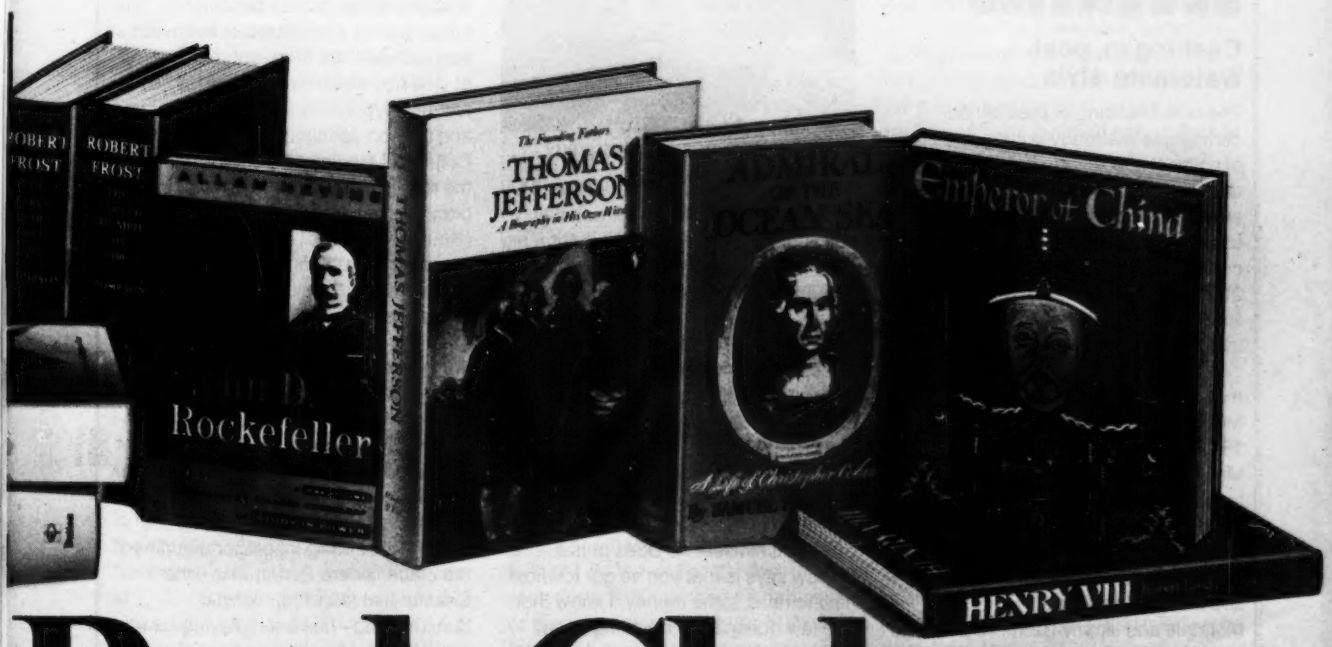

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aimed directly at the Pennsylvania senator, Justice Department sources said his role in the matter was being looked into. Scott's office said he would have no comment on the investigation, but a congressional source close to Scott said the senator was confident he would not be dragged into the affair.

SEVENTIES

Cashing in, post-Watergate style

The new financing of presidential campaigns is already putting one class of political specialist in hot demand: the direct mail wizards. Direct mail is the surest, and for many prospective candidates the only, way to raise contributions of $250 from 200 contributors in each of at least 20 states, the requirement that triggers matching funds from the government.

The most sought-after direct mail man is Morris Dees, a self-made Montgomery, Ala., millionaire who, in 1972, raised $18 million for the McGovern campaign. A liberal deeply involved in civil rights causes, Dees has already given advice (one of Dees' maxims is, long letters raise more money than short ones because they seem more "personal") to Fritz Mondale and Jimmy Carter (a personal friend) and at the moment is leaning toward Scoop Jackson. "I'm just planting some seeds to see which flowers bloom," Dees says modestly.

So prized is Dees' counsel that the other day in Montgomery, another good ol' Alabama boy, George Wallace, called him in for a chat and tried to sign him up. Dees wouldn't go for George but, being neighborly, he put him on to Dick Vigory, the direct mail king of the far right, who, after some hesitation ("I'm afraid Wallace is too liberal"), took over the Wallace campaign.

The way the public financing law is written, Dees says, any candidate

Dees: plotting a grand strategy

with a strong emotional appeal (and a lot of powerful advice on direct mail solicitation) can cut himself in for a big slice of the federal pie. "Take somebody like Ramsey Clark," explains Dees. "If he uses direct mail and plows all the money he makes from it into more direct mail, and say he raises $5 million—well, the government just gives him another five. So he's got $5 million in the clear."

The prospect of all that federal dough is so appealing, Dees says jokingly, that he's thinking of running for president himself. As Dees puts it: "All the law says is that you've got to know how to raise some money. I know that. The law doesn't say anything about having to be a serious candidate. Well hell, how can you pass something like that up?"

HEALTH

Plus ça change . . .

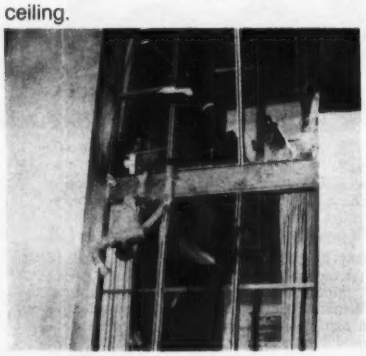
Further evidence of our changing sex mores comes from Dr. Lourdes Corman and her associates at the Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. In the course of prenatal screening of 723 pregnant women for gonorrhea, Dr. Corman found that an astonishing 38.7 percent of those with the disease had the infection in their pharynxes. In some ways, however, things have apparently not changed at all. Dr. Corman reports in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that most of the women "vehemently denied" practicing oral intercourse.

The myth of the moon

One of the most popular and persistent folktales is that human behavior is influenced by the phases of the moon and that men are more apt to do deeds of violence when the moon is full. To test this hypothesis Drs. Alex Pokorny and Joseph Jachimczyk of Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, analyzed the records of all 2,613 homicides that occurred in Harris County, Texas (Houston), over a 14-year period—and found no correlation whatsoever with the full moon. "We believe," they write in the *American Journal of Psychiatry,* "that the effect of moon phases on homicide, suicide and mental illness should be viewed as a myth."

Best special effects ever

The owners of the United Artists Theater in Chicago's Loop got a bit of unhappy news from the city recently. It seems that a city building inspector examined the place, where *Earthquake*—the disaster film featuring realistic Sensurround—has been playing for a month, and discovered cracks in the ceiling.



Earthquake: not such good vibrations

SPECIAL REPORT

Some speculators *did* make money when gold prices took a dive

By Edward Zuckerman

At 11:03 a.m. on December 31, a professional metals speculator from Boston strolled onto the floor of the Commodity Exchange in New York and looked up at one of the blackboards that cover the walls of the room. He noticed that February gold—that is, a contract to deliver 100 ounces of gold in February—had just sold at $188 an ounce. He had a thought: maybe he should sell a couple of contracts. He looked over at the brand new gold trading ring, where brokers were jammed three and four deep, yelling and crowding and waving their arms,

and decided not to bother. He hadn't come to deal that day; he'd only come by to see the ceremonies marking the opening of gold trading.

So he continued across the room and got into a conversation with an acquaintance. After a few minutes of talk, at 11:20, he glanced up and looked at the February board again. "Look at that," he said. The latest February price was 186. "If I had sold those contracts, I would have made $400."

"You mean that instead of talking to me, you could have made $400?" asked the acquaintance, who was feeling a little bit guilty.

"I wasn't just talking to you," said the speculator. "I stopped for a drink of water, too."

This is how the unruffled speculator could have made $400:

At 11:03 February gold was selling at 188. If he had "sold two contracts," he would have committed himself to deliver 200 ounces of gold to somebody in February at the rate of $188 an ounce. The fact that he didn't have an ounce of gold to his name didn't matter, for he had until February to buy the gold he would need to satisfy the contract. As it happened, he would have been able to buy that 200 ounces at 11:20 for $186 an ounce—a quick $2-an-ounce profit, or $400.

Of course, if the price of gold had gone up after he had contracted to sell, he would have lost money. But the speculator makes more right moves than wrong ones, or he wouldn't be a professional speculator for long.

The same is true of his colleagues, many of whom had anxiously awaited this December 31, which was the first day in 41 years that Americans were allowed to buy gold. The pros were anxious to *sell* gold, which had inflated to an all-time record price in anticipation of the opening of the U.S. market.

"I wanted to be a seller," said one full-time speculator two hours after the market opened, "but in all that pandemonium I couldn't get my bid in."

The pandemonium erupted promptly at 9:45 a.m., following a promotional bagels-and-lox breakfast for the press, a spate of speeches from various officials about "this historic occasion," and the ceremonial tinkling of a golden bell by Senator James Buckley. In his remarks, Buckley had celebrated the lifting of the gold ban as an extension of personal freedom, exemplifying a tradition of "gold bugs" as right-wingers and vice versa. (Typically, a book called *How To Invest in Gold Coins*, published by Arlington House, laments that the Nationalists lost China to the Reds because they went off the gold standard.)

Buckley didn't mention it, but speculating in gold is probably more of an American tradition than investing in it. During the Civil War, speculators in the Gold Room of the New York Stock Exchange so notoriously unsettled the nation's economy that New York gold brokers were dubbed "General Lee's left wing." In 1869 robber baron Jay Gould attempted to corner the market in gold and almost succeeded. In the hours before his strategy finally collapsed, a mob gathered outside the Gold Room shouting "Lynch! Lynch!" while inside fortunes were being won and lost, according to a contemporary newspaper report, "by hundreds of howling desperate men, maddened out of all calculation by frightful alternations of hope and fear."

There was no howling during Buckley's speech at the Commodity Exchange, but there were a few chuckles, especially when he proudly displayed the 2½ ounces of gold wafers he had purchased at 30 seconds after midnight. At the end of the day, they were worth $25 less than he had paid for them, as the opening day of the "new gold rush" fizzled from coast to coast. It was a good day for gold only at the Commodity Exchange (and three other commodities exchanges in New York and Chicago),where speculators, unlike wafer buyers, could make money just as well from a drop in the price of gold as from a rise.

In addition to those who were anxious to sell short (sell gold they didn't have), the new gold trading ring at the Commodity Exchange attracted arbitragers—those who profit from small price differences between the several commodities exchanges and Europe. "You see that guy?" said one floor broker, pointing to a man wearing a telephone headset. "That's an open line to his firm's office. They keep lines open to every American commodities exchange and Europe. They're way ahead of the ticker. If gold's selling for a buck cheaper in Zurich, they buy some there and sell it here."

The gold ring also attracted dealers in "spreads," who profit from price differentials between the delivery months. All commodities tend to be more expensive in more distant months. April gold, for example, is more expensive than February gold. The difference theoretically reflects what it would cost to store gold between February and April. This price configuration is called "contango." (Yes, one dealer did publish an article called "The Last Contango in Paris.") Spread traders act when they feel the price differences are out of line. They may buy and sell dozens of times in a day, and they make a lot of money.

All of this business is generally conducted with the quiet dignity of a raid on a $2 whorehouse. Throughout the morning of the 31st, a mob of traders shouted out their bids ("April at 1½!") and offers ("0 for 1 April!") without a break. Deals were made by a wave of the hand or a nod of the head, followed by a brief notation on a slip of paper. Traders have to be quick and they have to trust one another, because a missed bid in a rapidly rising or falling market can cost thousands of dollars. About one hour into the gold trading, one young shirt-sleeved trader with flying hair suddenly shouted accusingly, "You said sold!" and pointed at a middle-aged trader on the other side of the ring. "Don't give me any of that crap," the man replied. "Who are you saying crap to?" demanded the first trader, moving toward the center of the ring. A hand grabbed his shoulder and its owner counseled, "Cut it out," and the dispute faded into the background racket. They don't always. A member of another exchange was fined not long ago for shoving his lighted cigar in a colleague's face.

By early afternoon, trading had slowed down. Gold was down about $10 an ounce, the maximum daily drop allowed by the exchange. So those who had sold in the morning and bought later had made up to $1,000 a contract, while those who had bought in the morning were sitting with $1,000 losses.

Most of the losers, however, were sitting far away from the floor of the Commodity Exchange. "This is a professional market," said the speculator from Boston. "The professionals more often than not make a profit. The amateurs more often than not take a loss."

As for himself, he said, the day had been "worthwhile."

How much had he made?

Nothing. He hadn't traded. But he had been invited to a New Year's Eve party "which should be a real bash." And he was, in fact, looking forward to a Happy New Year—speculating in gold.

South Carolina's silent death factory

By Amanda Spake

It took 30 minutes for word of the accident at the Barnwell Nuclear Fuel Plant to reach the Statehouse in Columbia, South Carolina, 60 miles to the north. By that time, there was little state officials could do to alert local residents to the possibility of disaster. Fortunately for South Carolina, it was dry and windy that December. The northern part of the East Coast was not as lucky; the weather was wet from Pennsylvania to Maine. By the Atomic Energy Commission's calculations, the floating Barnwell cloud—containing as much radiation as 2,000 Nagasaki-sized bombs—would hit rain just south of Philadelphia, spreading deadly, radioactive debris over the entire states of Delaware and New Jersey and much of Pennsylvania, Maryland and the greater New York metropolitan area.

Evacuation plans for the affected areas were woefully inadequate, designed only for nuclear catastrophes at operating atomic power plants. Nearly ten hours elapsed before the first Army evacuation trucks were ready to leave Philadelphia, but by then the Interstate was packed with terrified people fleeing the area in their own cars.

Twelve hours later the radioactive cloud broke, contaminating over 33,000 square miles, virtually eliminating five states and the largest cities on the East Coast.

The above is a grotesque drama that could occur any time after the Barnwell Nuclear Fuel Plant, the first large, commercial facility for reprocessing atomic fuel, begins operation in 1976. The Barnwell facility, a project of Allied General (itself a partnership of the blue-chip giants Allied Chemical, Gulf Oil and Royal Dutch Shell), will house more radioactive material than any other commercial plant in the world and will routinely emit more of it than any nuclear installation has ever been allowed to in the past. As one scientist puts it, in five years Barnwell will hold "aproximately the radioactivity that would be left decaying for hundreds of years from a large, full-scale nuclear war." Containing that much atomic garbage is nearly impossible, a task roughly comparable, as Barnwell's critics have it, to successfully caging 10 million rabid bats for eternity.

Allied General, for its part, stands to make a mint from the plant—$75 million annually, according to the latest estimate. By any standard, it will be dirty money. The spent fuel that the company plans to start importing into South Carolina in a few months contains not only radioactive uranium and plutonium, to be recycled into more nuclear fuel, but also a more sinister residue—high temperature wastes known as "fission products," similar in both their radioactive content and deadly effect to fallout released after the explosion of nuclear weapons. At the Barnwell plant, they will be stored in stainless steel tanks, buried underground. During their 20-year life span, the tanks will collect 60 times the fission products released in all atmospheric weapons testing by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. combined.

Once the Barnwell nuclear waste depository goes into operation, the world—or at least a large part of it—might truly end, not with a bang, but a whimper

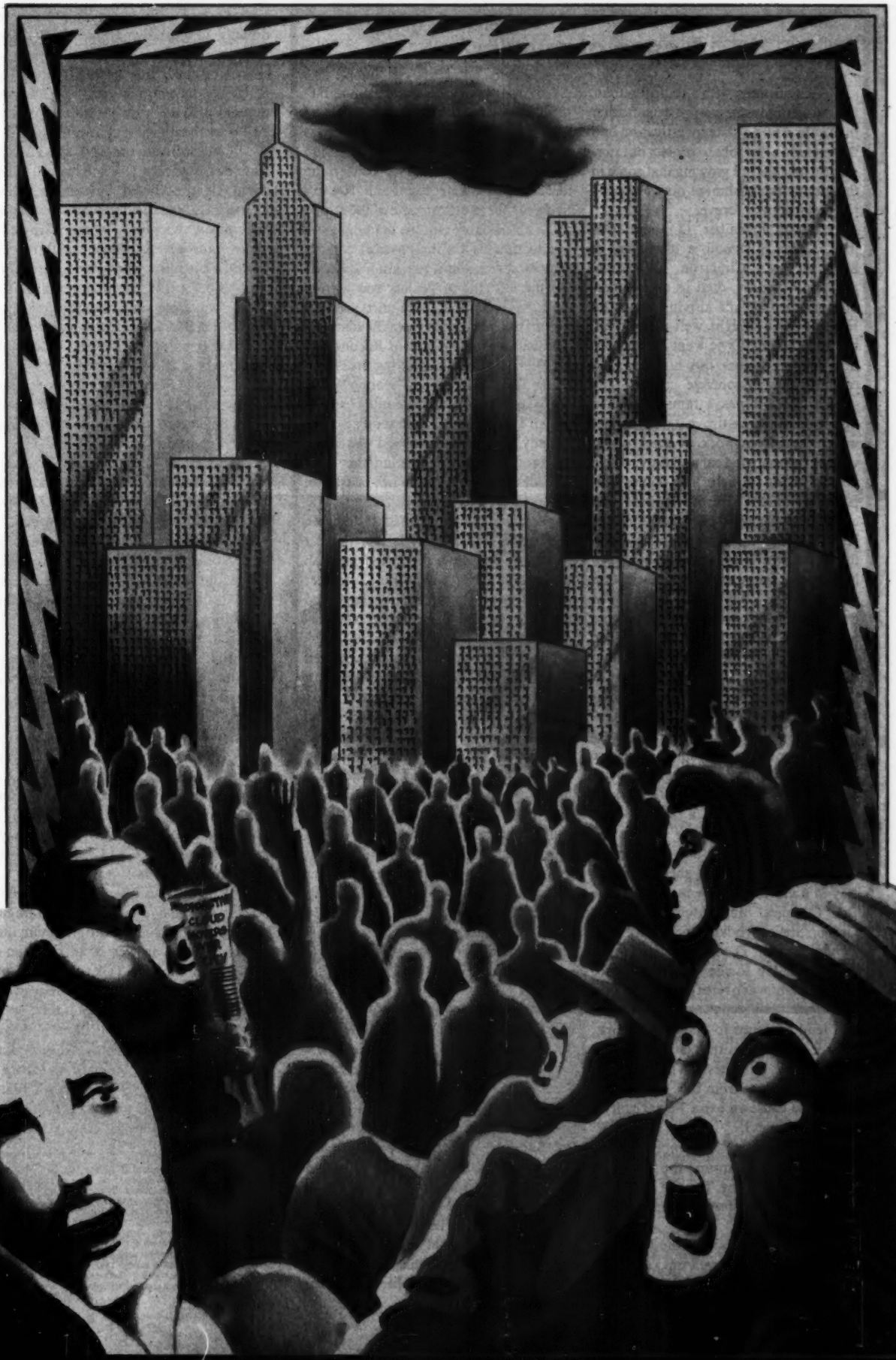
This would be scary enough even if it seemed likely that the people at Barnwell could keep all of that poison under control. But the evidence suggests that the chances of that are very slim indeed.

First of all, there is the business of getting the nuclear wastes to South Carolina. They are to be shipped, by rail or truck, in special containers called fuel casks that will give off enough radiation in transit to give anyone near one of them for only 17 hours his allowable radiation dose for an entire year. People living throughout the country on routes the spent fuel will travel are going to get zapped with about one-fourth of their yearly dose, just because they made the decision to buy or rent a home on the roads used by the fuel trucks. And that is just the beginning. *The company itself* predicts in its environmental reports that railroad accidents, like this fall's West Virginia derailment and fire, could release fission wastes that would contaminate food crops and land along the train routes. "*It is conceivable*," Allied General's reports note, "*that such an accident might occur every eight years.* " The company expects over 500 shipments to cross the country annually, one of the first from Portland, Oregon, 2,900 miles away.

Even if such an accident is avoided, routine emissions from the plant—that even Barnwell's defenders concede are inevitable—could make for drastic increases in disease in South Carolina and surrounding areas. Ernest J. Sternglass, a professor of radiological health at the University of Pittsburgh, told the South Carolina legislature that he believed the reprocessing facility would increase infant mortality and heighten the risk of cancer and heart disease in the state, when the plant begins regularly releasing small amounts of radioactive waste. "By refusing to study the effects of radiation from the nuclear weapons programs," he says, "we are in trouble." Laboratory tests on animals by the Canadian Atomic Energy

Amanda Spake's last NEW TIMES *piece was on prescription payola.*

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON



A case of murder?

Confronted with a critical public, the nuclear industry may go even further than subverting a state investigation and threatening a few jobs to protect its interests. Suspicions are growing that some in the atomic establishment may be trying to quiet its critics forever.

Last November 13 about 7:00 p.m., Karen Silkwood, a technician at Kerr McGee's Cimarron, Oklahoma, plutonium factory, died in an automobile accident. While driving south on Highway 74, a straight, well-paved road, her 1973 Honda Civic went out of control, veering across the highway and crashing into a concrete culvert. The stretch of road was a familiar one to Silkwood, since she drove it daily on her way to and from work. A truck driver spotted her mangled car and drove to the nearest phone for help. The phone happened to be at the Kerr McGee plant and as the trucker moved on with his load, a Kerr McGee official went to stay with the wreck until the Oklahoma State Police arrived. Based on their investigation and an autopsy, which showed traces of Quaalude in her blood, the Oklahoma State Police believe Silkwood fell asleep at the wheel and drifted off the road into the culvert.

Shortly before the accident, Silkwood had been contaminated with plutonium, a highly toxic, radioactive material, only one speck of which can cause lung cancer if inhaled. She had repeatedly called attention to unsafe working conditions at the plant, a facility which saw 87 reported employee contaminations in only 4½ years of operation. At the time of her accident, she was on her way to a meeting with a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, Steve Wodka, and New York *Times* reporter David Burnham. Silkwood intended to show them evidence that the plant was overexposing its workers to radioactive materials, manufacturing faulty plutonium fuel rods and falsifying the records to indicate the rods were up to Atomic Energy Commission standards. No documents concerning these charges were found on Karen's body, in the car or at the site of the crash.

Even more curious than the missing documents are the physical circumstances surrounding the auto accident. On the left side of her car was a fresh dent, so fresh that road dirt was not detectable in the scratches. The dent was discovered by the Accident Reconstruction Lab, a private consulting firm hired by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers to investigate the accident. The Dallas lab's first report, issued soon after the tragedy, stated that Silkwood was struck by another vehicle, creating the dent, and that the Honda went out of control before it hit the culvert. Since the Oklahoma State Police claimed they made the fender dent when pulling the car from the wreckage, the union and lab brought in another consulting engineer to check the first report. The second and final report, issued December 15, corroborated the lab's earlier conclusions.

The investigating engineers went on to say that the tracks left by her skidding car were not those made by an automobile that drifts from the road when a driver falls asleep at the wheel. They add, "This [the track prints] showed that the car was out of control before it ever left the paved portion of the road. The only way that this vehicle could achieve this attitude was for the car to have been out of control before it left the roadway." The engineers conclude that an impact from another car, causing the fresh dent and forcing Silkwood's back wheels to sway, probably combined with her own overreaction to another car striking hers, caused her death.●

Board lend credence to Sternglass' fears. And a recent report by the National Academy of Sciences indicates that normal "acceptable" emissions from U.S. nuclear facilities could cause an extra 20,000 cancer deaths each year. "If this is true," Sternglass concludes, "it simply means that people exposed around the Barnwell plant won't live as long. The life span will be cut by the early onset of stroke, heart disease or cancer."

Curtis and Suzanne Rhodes, who live 60 miles from Barnwell in Columbia, share Sternglass' apprehensions. An engineering professor at the University of South Carolina and a former designer of reactor systems for Westinghouse and the AEC's Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, Curtis strongly questions the nuclear industry's judgment in rushing ahead with the Barnwell plant. "What I'm worried about most," he says, "is the stuff they're sending out the stack." The Barnwell plant will release several types of fission products, among them Iodine 129, a kind of radioactive iodine that has a half-life of 17 million years, which means only half of its destructive potential will be gone in that time. In the human body, Iodine 129 goes directly to the thyroid and stays there forever, increasing as it builds up the chance of malignant thyroid tumors. The Rhodeses have three children, and the thought of them growing up on diseased air leaves them frightened and angry.

According to the AEC's Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the Barnwell plant could release 50 to 100 times more Iodine 129 than Allied General had originally anticipated. Coupled with Barnwell's other radioactive releases, Barnwell County residents may receive a dose more than 30 percent higher than the disputed "safe" radiation limits. Some of this iodine will collect in milk, fish and produce and be transported to other areas of South Carolina and the U.S. "There are crops near that plant—soy beans, dairy farms," Curtis adds. "Those releases are a constant radiation hazard worse, in my opinion, than the chance of a big accident."

And then there *is* that last possibility—the Big Accident. The scenario for the demise of the Northeast cited above was first outlined by Dr. John Gofman, a professor of medical physics at the University of California, when he testified before the South Carolina legislature in 1972. Gofman calculated that only a small accidental release from Barnwell's enormous radioactive inventory, say 1 percent, from a severe earthquake, a tornado or a saboteur's explosive, "could easily lead to damages in the neighborhood of $10 billion or more, to say nothing of the most massive civilian dislocations and suffering in peacetime history," and would permanently poison 33,400 square miles of land. After such a castrophe, the land itself would emit 170 millirems (a measurement of radioactivity) every day, the same amount the AEC considers safe for the population in a year.*

The obvious question would seem to be how a scheme so riddled with tragic possibilities could get off the ground in the first place. The answer is an old one—politics and money. Talk of the plant started in the mid-'60s when Barnwell County—through the speaker of the South Carolina House, Solomon Blatt, and the president of the State Senate, Edgar Brown—ran the state legislature. According to the Columbia *Record*, both Blatt and Brown wrote letters to the Atomic Energy Commission in 1966 extending

*Gofman and his associate from the AEC's Livermore Biomedical Lab, Arthur Tamplin, have even questioned that rather arbitrary safety benchmark. By their calculations, if 170 millirems were given to every American every year, the nation would see 32,000 extra cancer and leukemia deaths annually. This quantity of fallout on the ground from a Barnwell accident, emitting 170 millirems daily, would increase cancer deaths and genetic defects up and down the East Coast to astronomical proportions. "It is obvious that such exposure is not thinkable," Gofman adds, " and that evacuation would have to be considered." At this time, evacuation plans exist only for the area immediately surrounding the Barnwell plant.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY CAGLE

Blatt (above) and Brown, the heads of the "Barnwell reign" in the state legislature. They wanted to help their home town.

South Carolina's welcome to a nuclear reprocessing facility. "I think," says Townsend Belser, an environmental lawyer who has fought the plant, "that as far as the legislature was concerned, Sol Blatt wanted to do something for his county. The 'Barnwell Reign' in the legislature was ending and this is a very depressed area. So here comes Allied General, and Sol and the others decided to grease the skids. To Sol Blatt, it was just a big industry for his county."

Seventy-nine-year-old Solomon Blatt, now speaker emeritus of the state legislature, is the epitome of the aging, Southern politician. A bald, pot-bellied man, he sits at his desk in his law office in downtown Barnwell, next door to Bert's Dollar Store, directing the affairs of his county. When the legislature is in session, he still goes to Columbia to "devote my full attention to it." A birthday card on the wall behind Blatt's desk appropriately reads: "To a Man of Many Hats."

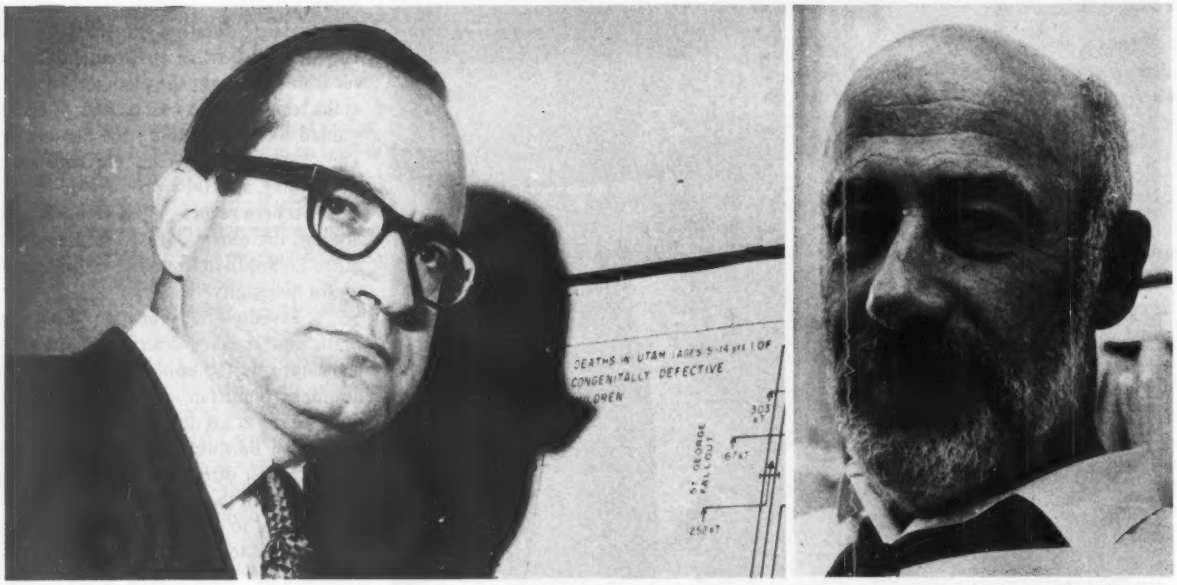
"I haven't heard anyone from this

A report from the National Academy of Science says that "normal" emissions from nuclear plants could cause 20,000 deaths annually

area, except one woman, say he doesn't want the plant here," says Blatt. "You should see the fine houses going up around here—seventy and eighty thousand dollar homes." The speaker is right there. The Allied General facility will triple the tax base of Barnwell County. During construction, the plant provided nearly 2,000 jobs and will employ 400 people after it begins operation. In a few years, the sleepy town of Barnwell will have grown from 4,500 to 7,000 people.

But then, there appears to be something in it for Blatt, too, beyond the mere satisfaction of seeing his community prosper. His law firm is handling a number of contracts for Allied General, including agreements for the fuel casks in which spent fuel will be shipped.

Blatt is not the only state official who appears to have gained from the Barnwell plant. State Development Board members Robert Blair, Henry Schultz and Tom Mason, all of whom actively promoted the plant, found themselves with new jobs after Allied General made the decision to go ahead. Blair was hired di-



Drs. Sternglass (left) and Gofman. Their testimony before the state legislature, harrowing as it was, couldn't stop the plant.

rectly by Allied General. Schultz became the vice-president of a company called Chem-Nuclear, which runs a radioactive waste dump right next door to the Allied General facility. Chem-Nuclear will handle the company's "low-level" wastes, those not considered dangerous enough for shipment to the federal waste depository. And Mason founded a public relations firm called Talent Associates, whose biggest client became—who else?—Allied General.

Of the three, Mason has had the most visible continuing role in the promotion of the Barnwell project. While serving as Allied's P.R. man in Columbia, he made a point of joining environmental organizations, whose activities he then attempted to direct. He founded and became president of a local Sierra Club chapter, for example, and when some of its members wanted to discuss the reprocessing plant, Mason invited the vice-president of Allied General to speak on the subject; the Columbia Sierra Club never took a stand on the plant. (By contrast, the Buffalo, New York, chapter is taking the lead in a fight against a smaller plant slated to begin operating in its area in 1980.) Mason also had himself appointed to the boards of the Audubon Society and the South Carolina Environmental Coalition—and was generous enough to provide office space for both; neither group ever took on the environmental issues raised by the Barnwell plant.

But Allied General reserved its most potent ammunition for the hearings on the facility held by the South Carolina legislature, which figured to provide the fullest public airing of the dangers raised by the Barnwell plant. "The state legislature," said Speaker Blatt, after the hearings were over and the issue had been resolved in Allied General's favor, "made a very thorough study of this plant. The investigating committee heard witnesses for months, people from all over the country. Some were from the AEC, some were college professors, and they gave us a clean bill of health. I've never seen a more thorough investigation."

A 1 percent release from Barnwell would cause massive dislocation, $10 billion in damages and the permanent poisoning of 33,400 square miles

There are those who would not only quarrel with that assessment but who would submit that the hearings were rigged from the start—with the active compliance of members of the AEC. Prior to the hearings, representatives of the State Development Board, Allied General and local politicians met several times in Governor John West's office to map out a strategy for manipulating the legislature's investigation and neutralizing public opposition to the plant. Speaker Blatt himself, according to Allied General internal memoranda, suggested the company "snow the Committee with witnesses." Allied General did just that, and in the end there remained only two witnesses whose appearances concerned them—scientists Ernest Sternglass and John Gofman.

To negate Sternglass' testimony on the possibility of infant mortality and shortened life span around the plant, Allied General printed reams of material for the Nuclear Study Committee and the press. "They must have been preparing for months," Sternglass says, "because they felt my testimony would be so damaging." Allied General did, in fact, believe that Sternglass' testimony might have badly hurt the project. An internal information report to Howard J. Larson, then Allied General's president and now with the AEC, states, "If we had not done a good job of preparation, the Sternglass testimony would have been disastrous."

The company called in its heaviest guns, however, in its attempt to discredit John Gofman's testimony concerning the dangers the Barnwell plant posed to the East Coast. Slated to testify before Gofman was then-Commissioner of the Atomic Energy Commission James Ramey. Always a friend to the nuclear industry, Ramey's office phoned Allied General, according to company memos, asking what the commissioner should say before the state investigating body.

Allied General indicated that Ramey should mention the "extra" safety features in the Barnwell plant. But more than that, the company asked that the commissioner, the man at the top of the federal agency charged with overseeing nuclear safety and above reproach in the eyes of the state committeemen, throw doubt on the upcoming testimony of John Gofman. In its final report, the Nuclear Study Committee discounted Gofman's

testimony and, with few reservations, endorsed the reprocessing plant.

Ramey was not Allied General's only friend at the AEC. Ted Workinger, of the AEC's Division of Licensing, volunteered to steer the Barnwell facility through to completion and to prepare the commission's environmental statement on the plant. It was not a difficult task for Workinger since, according to company reports, he had helped Allied General prepare the raw information he later used, as the AEC coordinator for the project, to make his review on behalf of the American people.

Company memos further indicate that Workinger was anxious to get Allied's environmental review completed, fearing public opposition to the plant would grow. He believed, according to the memos, that the commission was in a tight spot since it had not bothered to set radiation limits for reprocessing plants, beyond the routine "as low as practicable" standard. He apparently felt that, given the flaws in the Barnwell proposal, any delay would give opposition to it time to build. Later, when asked if the AEC was pushing the reprocessing plant, Workinger responded, "I represent the U.S. public. I've been in this business for 24 years. We wouldn't let the plant operate if it weren't safe."

But the most significant figure by far in pushing the Barnwell facility through has been Allied General's Barnwell project director, Robert L. Newman. A tall man with a grey crewcut and an American flag perpetually in his lapel, Newman has been a whirling dervish of activity on behalf of the project; he has been Allied General's conduit to the AEC and the South Carolina pols, the primary organizer of the company's offensive in the legislature, and the main public speaker in support of the facility. Allied General memos reveal that over the years Newman has lunched with scores of state officials and university science professors and spoken before literally hundreds of local clubs and meetings.

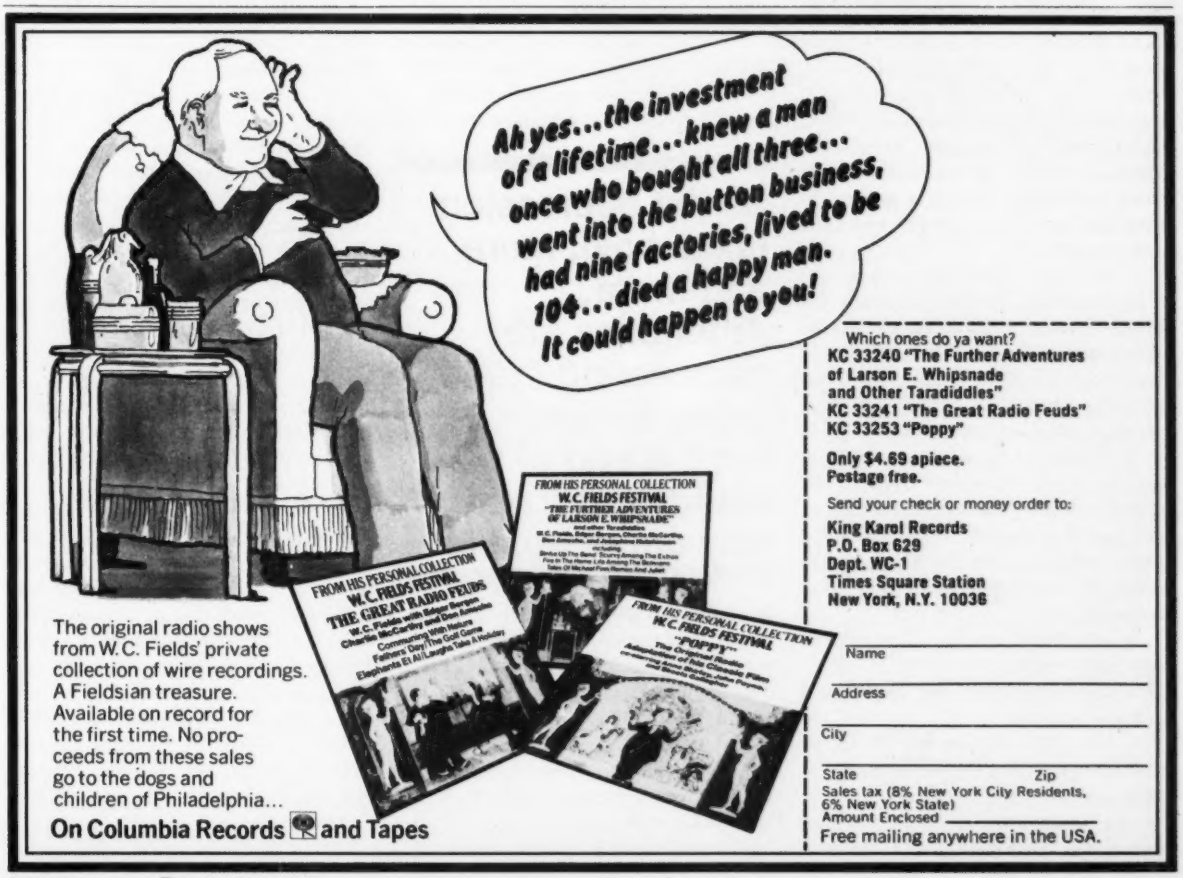
Newman makes no bones about his campaign to win friends and influence people. "Our big concerns," he says, "are economics and bad publicity. If there was an accident here, we'd just buy up the milk and produce and it may cost a few thousand, but then there's no worry. The largest credible accident here would release only 67 millirems."

Newman's claim is so off base that it is refuted even by Allied General's own environmental reports. The largest accident described in the reports as "credible" would release a whopping 325,000 millirems, nearly 2,000 times the "safe" yearly dose. Since the radioactivity, once released, would be there virtually forever, the company would be buying up milk and produce until there were no longer any humans to consume it.

"You know," adds Newman, fingering his cuff links—which feature little electrons spinning in orbit—and chuckling to himself, "I really get a kick out of some of the people down here. Somebody asked me, 'Why are you letting those trucks go around with *Radioactivity* on the outside of them?' I explained to them it was like gasoline. You see the sign on the outside of the truck, but the gasoline is on the inside."

Which is just the kind of cavalier disregard for truth that has characterized the Barnwell project from the beginning. The fact is, the *Radiation* trucks have nothing whatever to do with gasoline trucks; the trucks heading to Barnwell will, quite simply, produce emissions that kill people.

Robert Newman knows that. But like most of the others associated with the Barnwell plant, he is comfortable with the casual evasions and half-truths. He realizes that by the time the really tough questions get asked, no one in Barnwell will be around to answer them. ●


Ah yes...the investment of a lifetime...knew a man once who bought all three... went into the button business, had nine factories, lived to be 104...died a happy man. It could happen to you!
FROM HIS PERSONAL COLLECTION W.C. FIELDS FESTIVAL "THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF LARSON E. WHIPSNADE"
FROM HIS PERSONAL COLLECTION W.C. FIELDS FESTIVAL "THE GREAT RADIO FEUDS"
FROM HIS PERSONAL COLLECTION W.C. FIELDS FESTIVAL "POPPY"
The original radio shows from W.C. Fields' private collection of wire recordings. A Fieldsian treasure. Available on record for the first time. No proceeds from these sales go to the dogs and children of Philadelphia...
On Columbia Records and Tapes
Which ones do ya want?
KC 33240 "The Further Adventures of Larson E. Whipsnade and Other Taradiddles"
KC 33241 "The Great Radio Feuds"
KC 33253 "Poppy"
Only $4.69 apiece.
Postage free.
Send your check or money order to:
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P.O. Box 629
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Times Square Station
New York, N.Y. 10036
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Address
City
State Zip
Sales tax (8% New York City Residents, 6% New York State)
Amount Enclosed
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On taking a bath

By James Dwyer

Going bankrupt is not unlike contracting VD: socially acceptable but nothing to brag about.

Some brag anyway. Like a college friend of mine who went into broadcast journalism. He was doing rather well. Then along came marriage, children, house, etc. Later came separation, divorce, alimony and child support. After much financial anguish, another friend suggested bankruptcy. Having a well-developed taste for drastic measures, he leaped at the opportunity.

His day in court was a classic case of legal revenge. Standing tragically before the bench in his oldest clothes, he kept shifting his posture to hide the traveler's checks bulging in his pockets. When the judge perfunctorily asked if he had any assets, he shook his head sadly.

To the left stood his ex-wife's lawyers, thrashing like sharks about to be denied their pound of flesh. They snapped that their fees should not be discharged because of the many hours they had spent nailing the defendant for alimony and child support.

My friend fought a smile. The bankruptcy might be ruining his credit, but it was worth it to see the bloodthirsty lawyers get stiffed.

The judge listened intently to the pleading pair as they begged for the thousands due them. But, with an attempt at fraternal compassion, he disallowed their claim and discharged the threadbare debtor.

Not all bankruptcies throb with revenge and nose-thumbing. Most come about because of basic changes in a person's life: loss of job, wife, husband or common sense in dealing with credit cards.

Whatever the reason, bankruptcies are increasing significantly each year. Statistics from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in Washington show that

As the depression takes hold, more and more Americans are discovering that going bankrupt is not the end of the world—but a nifty way out of trouble

more than 170,000 individuals and businesses filed for bankruptcy in the fiscal year 1973—a figure that has doubled in a decade (personal bankruptcies account for most of the total: 155,707). In fiscal '74, the total number of bankruptcies filed was 189,513—an increase of 10 percent. And in the first four months of fiscal '75 (July-October), the monthly average of bankruptcies has increased over the year before by 20 percent—in October alone, the number of bankruptcies rose a staggering 50 percent over the monthly average the year before.

While more Americans are resorting to bankruptcy, being a legal and financial deadbeat isn't easy to take emotionally or financially. My own bankruptcy brings up ghosts now and again.

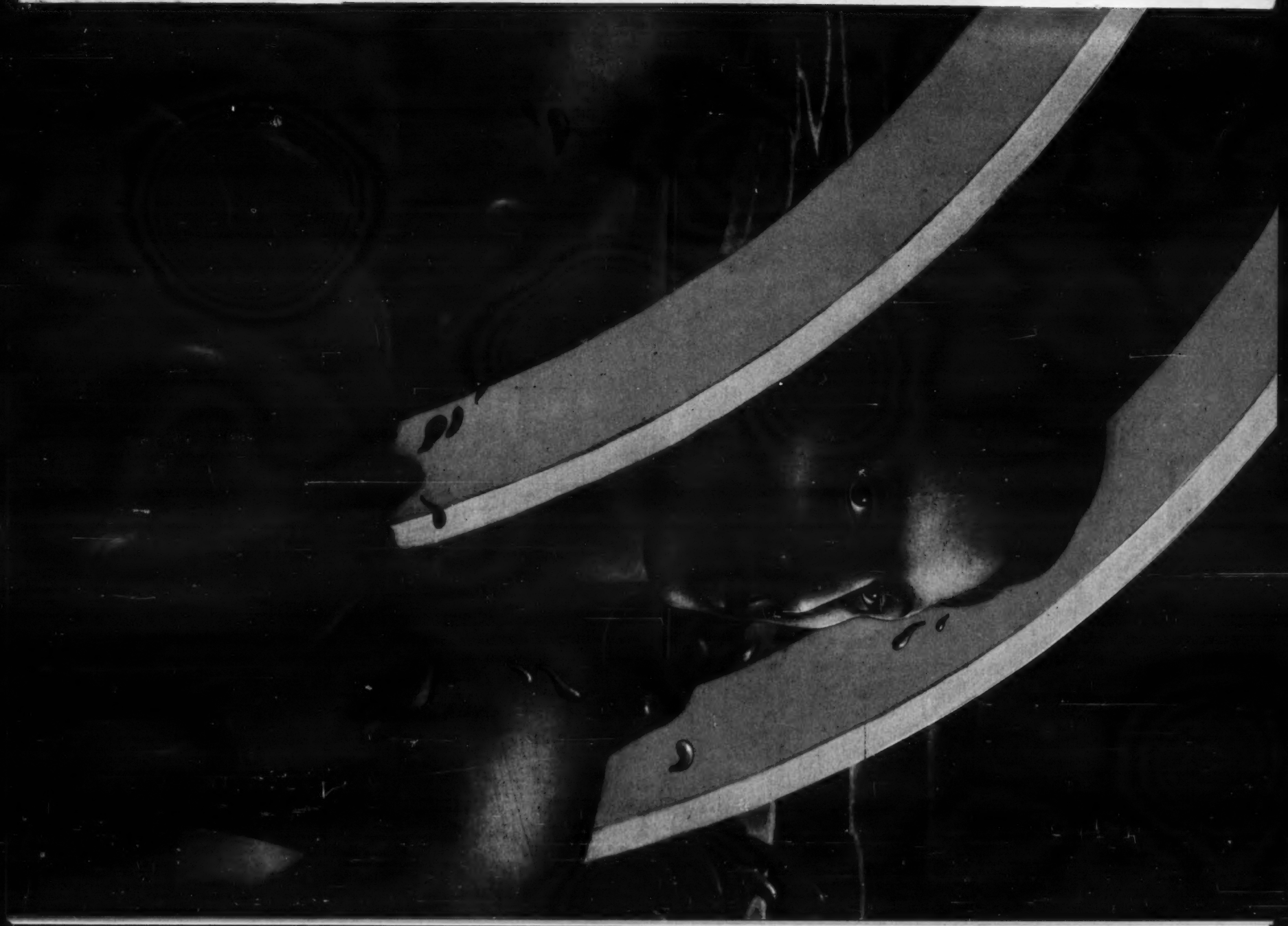
Not long ago my 8-year-old daughter and I were standing in the midst of a church carnival haggling over whether or not she should spend 50¢ tossing rings at empty bottles. Suddenly there was a roar overhead. Sailing majestically on the fading twilight was the long, black bunny jet. It was Hugh Hefner come to visit Barbie Benton in South Bend. Barbie was appearing at a local saloon, and Hugh likes to pop in on such occasions. While I stood there clutching the 50¢, hoping Hefner's dermatologist would find him allergic to pubic hair, it dawned on me how petty I was being. So I laid the coins on my kid and sulked off to the beer booth.

Thing is, that 50¢ would have looked monumental to me about a year ago, around the time of my bankruptcy. At one point I was down to 27¢ and seriously considering shoplifting at the local supermart. I was opposed to going on relief. Filling out forms and standing in lines brings me close to nausea.

How did I get in such sad financial condition? Mine was the modern American saga: marriage, children, divorce, alimony, child support, lawyers' fees (hers and mine), analyst's fees. Mix well with a recession in the midst of inflation, and POOF.

ILLUSTRATION BY DOUG GERVASI

ILLUSTRATION BY DOUG GERVASI



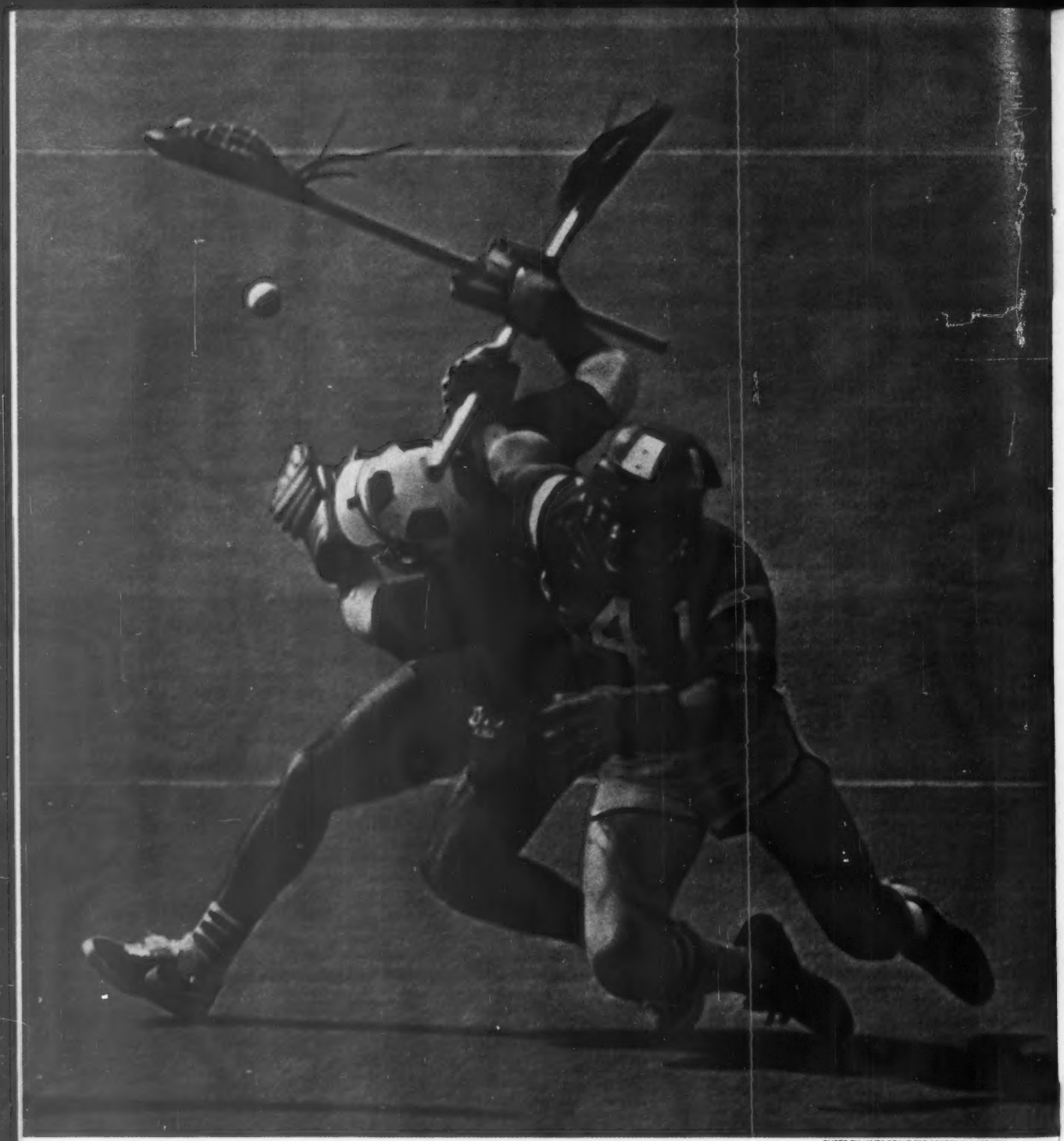


PHOTO BY JAMES DRAKE FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED.

What other newsweekly has 23 seasons?

Or is it 34 seasons? Or even 50?

Mixed in with the regular four seasons, The Third Newsweekly has the lacrosse season, the baseball season, the basketball, mountain-climbing, hockey, track and field, fishing, golf, tennis, sailing, skiing, football, soccer and car-racing seasons.

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In a wildly spiraling seven-year span, I had gone from a $50-a-week cub reporter to a $600-a-week free-lance publicist, speech writer, senatorial press aide and general communications troubleshooter.

One day, a very important election went the wrong way. The change in command at the statehouse left a lot of us court jesters with more leisure time than we cared for.

As the assignments dried up, the bills piled up. Fortunately or unfortunately, I had every major credit card. I practically had to stand on my wallet to get it closed. Gambling on an upturn in my fortunes, I used the cards rather than my dwindling supply of cash.

Along with the practical applications of credit, there were some impractical ones—like the winter trips to the Bahamas I had become accustomed to; the somewhat—business mostly—pleasure trips to California to hurry spring; and the New Year's bash in Martinique sunbathing with topless beauties.

Always in the background lurked that funny sensation that my balloon was leaking air, that I'd better look for a soft place to land.

I ignored the warnings, of course. I mean how could a high-flying, talented (competent?) bon vivant like me even consider a crash landing? Somebody was bound to come up with something for such a great kid. Right?

Wrong.

The inevitable came on slowly. First, waiters began to take a suspiciously long time bringing back my American Express card for signing. Airline ticket agents went from jovial to sullen as I jokingly offered to extend payment for a flight on my Diners Club card to 10 years. And the Hertz girls no longer gave smiling directions. They threw maps at me. My phone began ringing earlier and later than usual, and bills now bore demanding words in red 42-point FUTURA BOLD.

I kept assuring my creditors that this was all a temporary problem that would be solved by the next check. And as far as I knew, it would. The suspense—and the pressure—was maddening. I had more close calls with jobs and assignments during that period than an umpire with creeping glaucoma.

Then it happened. One beautiful Saturday afternoon, I was driving to the country in my sensuous Fiat 124 Spider with two young women and a French poodle. We all planned to spend the day romping on the green surrounding an estate owned by one of the girl's grandmaws. Despite my low finances, I was in high spirits.

Suddenly a suburban housewife, with enough metal curlers in her hair to materially affect radar reception for miles around, pulled into my lane. I couldn't have stopped if my tires had teeth.

Down, down, down the world came crashing, for I had been unable to make the last payment on my insurance policy—hoping that a few days would bring the necessary wealth to become current again. And her insurance company had just decided that business was better in South America—without formally informing their clients.

While the poodle whined, I tore at my left front fender with a crowbar, trying to straighten it for the one-car funeral back to Chicago. I knew it was the end. I began to feel disoriented. Nothing seemed to make sense anymore. I spent the rest of the day going from rage to staring at my roommate's unsympathetic cats, who sullenly stared back, waiting for me to complete my life cycle.

"I get all kinds," says a Chicago bankruptcy attorney, "from secretaries making under $10,000 to Ph.Ds earning $30,000 or more"

Not long afterwards, as my financial resources and ingenuity became exhausted, I packed my stereo equipment in a laundry bag to lug to the local pawnshop. I had to walk in the howling madness of a Chicago blizzard. My Fiat had been repossessed. I got $15 for more than $400 worth of electronic doodads. And I was glad to get it.

The bankruptcy was suggested by my delightfully bankrupt college friend. Having had such fun, he thought I shouldn't miss my opportunity. I still wasn't certain. It meant admitting in public that I wasn't able to handle myself financially—something my Boy Scout upbringing had taught me to have pride in. It also would mean abandoning more than 10 years of a perfect credit record. The choice was agonizing.

But there was a sense of giddiness to it also. I was being hounded for more than $8,000 in bills. The thought of being free of this burden was euphoric—euphoric enough to overcome the guilt.

So I did it.

I made out a list of creditors and gave it to the lawyer, along with $350 in fees and $50 for filing costs. About six weeks later there was a hearing—just me, my lawyer and the judge. None of my creditors showed up to protest the proceedings. The judge asked a few routine questions—how I had gotten into financial trouble, whether I had any assets, etc. Then he said simply: "Discharged."

I was waiting for something more when my lawyer grabbed me by the arm and hustled me toward the door. It had taken less than five minutes. As we stepped from the courtroom, my lawyer slapped me on the back and crooned: "Bet that was the quickest bath you ever had!"

"Taking a bath" is the fraternal designation for going bankrupt. He was right. I never had a quicker one. The aftermath was bland. My mail virtually stopped, as did my telephone. My creditors were legally blocked from bothering me. Within another six weeks, I received my formal discharge from the U.S. District Court, and that was that. I had been given a new lease on my financial life—a life I would have to learn to live without credit, an almost un-American existence.

Gone were the winter vacations. I couldn't even rent a car. Hertz, Avis, etc., don't want to see your face unless you've got one of the major cards. Department stores and expensive restaurants became as useful as museums to me. I could only look.

Every bankruptcy has a catalyst, says a prominent Chicago attorney who pleaded to remain anonymous. "Something has happened in the bankrupt's life. For the most part, people don't go out and buy blindly. They are generally competent and keep their spending within reasonable limits. But something happens—divorce, death, an accident, extensive hospitalization, loss of a job—you name it. Anything that can drastically decrease income or increase expenses."

Harsh collection practices is another factor that drives people into bankruptcy, he said. The current explosion in bankruptcy filings began in the middle '60s, when harassed borrowers found hard-nosed collectors making every waking moment miserable. And the waking moments often come at 3 a.m.

"My business peaked in the period between 1965 and 1969," the attorney noted. "Then it slowed a bit as credit reform legislated against such harsh collection tactics. But now it's going up again. This time it's inflation."

Federal Judge William J. Lasarow

Jim Dwyer is a free-lance writer in Indianapolis.

The student bankruptcy ploy

Over the past decade, 10,000 students who borrowed educational loans declared a safe, simple bankruptcy. This year, while Congress flounders in the face of an unexpected half billion dollar student loan debt, the number of academic bankrupts continues to multiply.

This depression-era trend is easy to understand. Students, who have been blocked out of shrinking scholarship funds and enticed by readily available loan sources, are graduating by the thousands with diplomas in one hand and $10,000 repayment schedules in the other. Faced with grim job prospects in an inflated economy, these young debtors are perfect, if unlikely, candidates for a quick, asset-less bankruptcy.

Marcia Johnson, a doctoral student in psychology at a large, Midwestern university, is such an academic bankrupt—and proud of it. Three years ago, she and her husband, also a doctoral student, owed $13,000 in federally insured, New York State loans. Today, because of a 20-minute visit to a bankruptcy court, they're free of debt, worry and a burdensome financial future.

Hardly a radical, Ms. Johnson does not view her bankruptcy as a rip off of her university or of the government. She simply rationalizes the act as a kind of government subsidy or compensation for the years she has spent studying under near-poverty conditions. "After all," she explains, "there are better ways to begin my professional career than with a multi-thousand dollar debt."

Economy-minded members of Congress, however, do not take academic bankrupts lightly. The total student loan debt is no academic matter: an advisory report called it "a threat to the continuance of the educational loan program." And in a year when the Federal Bankruptcy Act is undergoing revision and the Higher Education Act is due to expire, student loans may become a hot political issue.

Over the past eight years, according to federal sources, the combined governmental student loan lenders have made nearly $7 billion available to 4 million students. As part of a subsidy arrangement, the government insures the loans and picks up the tab in the event of a default. A recent General Accounting Office report predicted that an average of 24.3 percent of all loans outstanding as of last January 1 would never be repaid.

In dollars, the government stands to lose in the neighborhood of $508 million. To make things worse, the wave of publicity that followed the GAO report is sure to inspire more students to evade or discharge their debts. Small wonder then that red-faced officials of the Office of Higher Education in Washington are frantically huddling with congressional subcommittees to work out a scheme for cutting off loan abuses.

The most publicized idea is to make student loans a non-dischargeable debt under a revised Federal Bankruptcy Act. This is already the case with alimony and taxes. Since bankruptcy represents only a slim slice of the total loan debt, however, other measures are sure to be taken.

Ten years ago, no one anticipated how hard it would be to make students pay back loans. Today, evidently, they still haven't. The original federal budget for fiscal 1975 estimated a student loan loss of $134 million. The new forecast has reached $245 million and will probably fall short.

Since most loan programs don't require repayments until nine months after graduation, the task of locating debtors is always a problem. Even when students who owe money are located, the difficulty of collection persists.

Dick Rowe, a loan administrator for the National Direct Student Loan program (once the National Defense Student Loan—granddaddy of all educational loan programs), concedes there have been no delinquency prosecutions at the federal level and few at the university level for his program.

Rowe says this is "because these are essentially character loans." Instead of prosecuting delinquent loans at the federal level, the NDSL reduces allotments to the universities by the amount the institution loses in uncollected payments. At Columbia University, for instance, allotments dropped by $600,000 in one year.

Yet as any collection officer can tell you, if parents or relatives do not cosign for education loans—which is the case in most states with an 18-year-old age of majority—litigation to recover a debt can be a difficult, costly procedure which is often doomed to failure. A harassed student debtor, after all, can always declare bankruptcy.

And finally, college has become a bad risk, whether the money is borrowed or earned. As one loan administrator at the University of Wisconsin recently put it for the campus daily: "Although college education may be worth something intellectually, it's turning out that it is not such a good investment. People are not getting jobs. They're not finding the employment that will enable them to pay back the money they borrowed."

When investments sour, bankruptcy festers; enter the bold new breed of academic bankrupts. One new convert summed it up: "The funny thing is that when my bankruptcy went through, I became respectable again. I have no debts, I have a decent job, a good income and I'm a good credit risk because under the law I can't go bankrupt again for another six years."

Beneath contempt? Will it ruin your credit rating? Not necessarily. This month, three years after her bankruptcy, Marcia Johnson secured another federally insured student loan.

—Dan Schwartz

of the Los Angeles Bankruptcy Division says that personal bankruptcy has jumped on the West Coast in the last two years. "Medical problems, business layoffs, improvident spending and no sales resistance have a lot to do with it," claims Judge Lasarow. "Unemployment is a big factor out here."

Who goes bankrupt? Is there a certain type? According to court records, anybody can play and pay, and does. The only predisposition seems to be in favor of employees, as opposed to those who pay their wages.

"I get all kinds," says the Chicago bankruptcy attorney, "from secretaries making under $10,000 to people with Ph.Ds and Masters degrees earning $30,000 and more. The common denominator seems to be family trouble. Most of them are divorced or separated."

Judge Lasarow says that about 50 percent of his cases are women. "It seems that when a husband files, his wife files also, because if the creditors are barred from acting against him, they will act against her."

Some people make a game out of the whole business and wind up in bankruptcy court as often as possible. Eric Berne described the more chronic types in his *Games People Play*.

Dr. Berne declared that being in debt is a way of life with Americans, giving life a "purpose." One of the games played within this framework he labeled TAC (Try and Collect). Usually indulged in by young marrieds, TAC requires buying all sorts of things on credit without the

slightest intention of paying. Sometimes the creditors give up trying to collect, thus giving the TAC players a concrete victory. But even if the creditors persist, that just adds spice to the game and encourages the TAC players to new heights—and depths—of trickery and evasion.

Professional bankrupts are often connected with your local crime syndicate. The professionals play a game called "scamming." They take over an ailing business, use the already established credit lines to obtain substantial merchandise, sell the merchandise at below cost, pocket the money, and then file bankruptcy when the credit is exhausted.

As long as the government can prove no concrete intent to defraud, the scammers get away free. A common, and difficult to defeat, defense I used to hear while covering bankruptcy court as a newsman was: "Your Honor, I lost it all at the race track."

Historically, attitudes toward delinquent debtors have been rather unfriendly, from chopping off hands and heads to selling children into slavery to throwing deadbeats into debtor's prison. The term "bankrupt" comes from Italy, where bankers and moneylenders did business on the streets from benches. If one of them couldn't pay his bills, the others literally broke his bench. While having a ruptured bench is no fun, it sure beats the hell out of losing your head.

The current bankruptcy law in the United States was enacted in 1898 and substantially revised in 1938. Legislation is now pending that might repeal the old law and create a new one by 1976. Designated HR 10792, this new legislation was introduced in the House by California Congressmen Don Edwards (D) and Charles Wiggins (R). Action is expected on it early in 1975. HR 10792 would make some major changes in bankruptcy proceedings, the most significant of which would be to create a new arm of the government tentatively titled the United States Bankruptcy Administration.

Under the USBA, exemptions would be made uniform throughout the nation, lawyers and trustees (the creditor's representative) would be virtually eliminated from bankruptcy cases (about which lawyers and trustees are not too happy), the six-year limit for refiling a bankruptcy would be changed to five years, false financial statements would no longer be a legal wedge for loan companies to reopen bankruptcy cases, students with college loans would find it difficult to renege on payments (a significant reason for rising bankruptcies), and Chapter 13 or wage-earner plans would be encouraged over straight bankruptcies. In effect, the proposed legislation would make America's already liberal attitude toward debtors even more so in many cases.

Yet personal bankruptcy will not be easy for most individuals. While I poke fun at it now, at the time the experience was just a few anguish points away from a root canal with a half-inch bit. There are some, of course, who weather the anguish and the salivating creditors and work their way back from the brink of bankruptcy. My lawyer was one of these, or so he told me condescendingly after my hearing.

If you can do it, fine. Your Boy Scout credentials will be unsullied and probably look even brighter than before, and you should be congratulated.

But for those of us who either couldn't or wouldn't hack it, there are compensations. Once your financial life begins to stabilize again, you will discover that spending only cash makes one feel somewhat superior, especially when you've just witnessed a soul in a restaurant, hotel or airport fumble exasperatedly and embarrassedly with a lost, expired, computer-fouled or rejected credit card.

Credit makes us sheepish, and although it has brought electro-plastic wonders to the ordinary consumer, it's difficult for the average person to get over the feeling that he's getting something for nothing. Creditors know this, and glory in it.

Once in a while—for kicks—I fill out one of those omnipresent credit card applications and drop it in a mailbox. It would be hilarious if someone actually sent me one. I wouldn't know what to do with it.

Or would I? ●

If you go . . .

—Anyone may file for bankruptcy. There is no maximum or minimum debt limit. Recent filings in Indianapolis showed bankrupts with debts of from $3,300 to $22,000 and assets of from $5 to $5,500.

—It costs $50 to file a bankruptcy petition, a standard form that can be picked up at most large stationers or law form publishers. The petition must include a schedule of assets and liabilities, together with the value and location of any property, the names of creditors and the amounts owed to each. As soon as you file a petition, your creditors are barred from harassing you anymore. If they have anything to say about your bills, they will have their day before the judge or referee.

—There are two kinds of personal bankruptcy proceedings: straight and Chapter 13. The former is used in the majority of cases, although some districts in the South vary. Chapter 13 is not really a bankruptcy because the individual retains his debts. The difference is that under a Chapter 13, he works out a plan with his creditors to pay over a period of years, usually three. This way he maintains his credit but avoids harassment from bill collectors.

—There are voluntary and involuntary bankruptcies. Most personal bankruptcies are voluntary; that is, initiated by the individual. Involuntary actions are initiated by creditors who feel the individual is dissipating his assets.

—It is not necessary to retain legal counsel for your bankruptcy. Increasing numbers of people are acting as their own lawyer when filing, thus saving legal fees. But if you do hire a lawyer, legal fees for a straight, uncomplicated bankruptcy usually run from $200 to $500, depending on your attorney's lifestyle. Courts review legal fees in bankruptcies to make sure they are not excessive.

—Even though bankruptcies are handled only by the federal courts (state and local courts have no jurisdiction), exemptions allowed to a bankrupt are determined by state law. Accordingly, there are wide variations from New York to California as to what and how much the bankrupt may retain. Generally, exemptions include clothing, a certain amount of wages, basic transportation (they'll probably let you keep your 1965 Dodge, but the '73 Eldorado will have to go on the block), varying amounts of equity in a home and the tools of your trade, such as a typewriter if you're a writer, hammers and saws if you're a carpenter. Money or other assets that a bankrupt acquires *after* the petition is filed are not part of the proceedings. In other words, if your Aunt Matilda heard you were in a bad way and laid $100,000 on you the day after you filed, your creditors can't touch it. You're starting a whole new ball game. If your petition is ultimately denied, however, either due to fraud on your part or failure to comply with a court order, you better take Aunt M's money and run.

Taking on Ma Bell

New York City—We live in a loft building on Duane Street in lower Manhattan, very near City Hall. A wholesale shoe store occupies the ground and second floors, while artists and their families live on the first, third and fourth. My husband, a painter, and I moved in November of 1972 after a long, long loft search.

This was an area not yet inundated by other loft-dwellers. In fact, our building was the only "residence" on the street. Surrounding us were small shoe wholesalers, mail-order houses, light-manufacturing jobbers, a Kung-Fu school and a few tawdry "Bargain Outlets" selling used suits and recycled sheets and pillow cases. The place was ideal. Granted we had to hike south to Chinatown for groceries and bus our laundry up to the Village, but the rent was reasonable, the area relatively clean and, after 6:00 p.m., virtually soundless. The only stumbling block to our happiness, and I mean that quite literally, was this queer, rather monstrous structure rising before us across the street.

By January and February of '73, "it" had become 20 stories of absolutely windowless granite slabs. And as it just sort of grew there, this massive, lifeless, stone thing, all of us in our building took to carelessly arguing its questionable aesthetics, architecture, physical size, actual purpose—but never, *ever* its ventilation. One night in March, however, its ventilation came to our attention when we were interrupted by a gigantic roar.

Those nifty bands of boxed-in slats which jutted out of the stone at the 10th and 20th floors were not poor attempts at visual variety after all but cleverly masked screens behind which enormous fans alternately sucked air in and out. The effect was not unlike a jet takeoff. But with one critical difference. This jet engine never flew away but *VROOOMED* and *ROOOMED* night and day.

Between 9:00 and 5:00, the noise was audible even over the daily street din, though apparently not enough to rankle the day people, who could only have heard it during brief forays from their insulated office buildings. Just we full-timers rang our hands in despair, for at night the roar was all ours.

At first we prayed it was only a temporary aberration. A generator for a new building going up. Some Con-Ed repair work. Vacuuming the subways? Sadly, almost morosely, we finally determined it was "el huge-o," the mysterious New York Telephone's Long Lines Building.

Clearly, something had to be done to kill the noise. Let's get together on this, I suggested brightly to my fellow tenants, reminding them of how we had all pitched in to successfully conquer a lazy landlord, some overenthusiastic meter readers, even the roaches.

Absolutely hopeless I was told. "After all, Jean, this is the PHONE COMPANY!"

I went over to the offending building more out of curiosity than cunning. The guards were genial but uninformative. They, too, were bothered by the noise. A minor higher-up was summoned. He identified the fans as the source of our problem but that was all he knew. He suggested, rather feebly, that perhaps when the building was totally finished it would all go away.

"Are you sure people live there?" he asked in disbelief, swinging his head in the direction of our building. "Oh, all up and down the street," I lied.

In truth, I was fighting the noise more or less alone. One other tenant agreed to at least make a visit to the building, dressed delightfully matronish and with a bleating infant in tow—her complaint giving credence to my boast of a swelling population. But everyone, just everyone, assumed we had met our match.

There was talk of more visits to the building, even of sabotage. I settled on calling the city's Noise Control number. I dusted off the old power-play handbook, and by the time some unidentified Noise Abatement receptionist picked up the phone I had become The Duane Street Residents Committee.

The voice responded with measured sincerity that our complaint would be processed. Thank you. Click.

Presumably, unknown wheels were swiftly put into motion but I acted out of instinct. I called the phone company and asked to speak with their buildings supervisor. (Who knew if such even existed?) "The Duane Street Residents

Committee is really up in arms," I sermonized to my next connection, a mumbled name I assumed was somebody's supervisor. "We've always gotten cooperation from the neighborhood businesses in the past," I continued . . . et cetera, et cetera. "You'll be hearing from us," I was told. And I never doubted it for a minute.

Three days later, the Long Lines Building's engineer, a Mr. Colyer, was on the phone. He was extremely courteous and a mother lode of unexpected information. Apparently assuming that my "committee" already knew anyway (why else the impassioned phone call three days before), Colyer offered the hot-off-the-presses Noise Abatement findings on the building's decibel count. With a 45 decibel count considered "normal-residential" and a 65 decibel count considered "absolute tolerance for a business situation; i.e., drilling, pile-driving, etc.," he explained, the Long Lines Building had been clocked at a whopping 73 decibel count. Up till then my phantom community had been firing blanks. Here was the real ammunition.

Colyer assured me that the fans were more active in winter, taking in cold air to cool off 20-story generators or what-have-you, but by summer, air-conditioning would do most of the job. In the meantime, he insisted, sound traps were being installed to baffle the roar.

A Noise Abatement official visited our loft a few weeks later. He jotted down the committee's complaints and told me that the phone company really got cracking when community relations were involved. I replied that my committee would be pleased but that we wanted results . . . and, also, your name and badge number please? For our records. I now had the most vital piece of information needed in any problem situation. Names. Genuine people. Not receptionists or secretaries. No more underlings.

During June, July and August the building was indeed relatively quiet. I waited.

By September, the fans were on in full force again. Granted, it was now lower case *vrooom, rooom,* but it was still intolerable, especially during the night. We bought earplugs, slept with the radio on. My husband began doing some of the calling, another voice to flesh out our floundering Residents Committee.

With names at the ready, he got through easily to people within Noise Abatement and the phone company, who assured us that "plans are being made . . . people are meeting."

We threatened legal action, a gigantic bluff. We not only had no committee, we had no money.

Then once again, we were given unasked-for firepower. A round of calls to the city agencies—most likely Noise Control—got back to the telephone company.

I now dealt directly with Fred Shen, senior consultant for Cerami and Associates of Long Island City, which the phone company had hired to deaden the noise. "A.T.&T. doesn't want any problems with their neighbors," he told us. "When they call us in, they're serious."

We emphasized to Shen and the phone company that legal proceedings were in the works. Shen agreed to do a noise exposure survey from a Duane Street residence to get a reading on what a committee member was actually hearing. After some feigned deliberation, we suggested a specific address. Our loft.

Shen found the fan noise in our loft "in excess of the New York Environmental Agency criteria." While the worst reading was 55 decibels—a far cry from the original 73—it was still 10 decibels over the legal limit. And decibels climb geometrically, not arithmetically. Fifty-five is *double* 45.

On December 3, 1973, his firm filed a report to the New York Telephone Company recommending "further noise attenuation treatment on the fans." In May 1974 I learned from Harvey Oest, a field engineer working on the acoustics problem, that "equipment has been ordered, a special kind of sound silencer." By July, I was promised, the problem would be completely over and "we'll all get some sleep." Somewhat buoyed, I asked Oest just what our complaint had cost the phone company beyond the initial $40,000 for bafflers. "Let's just say enough to buy you a house in the country."

It's now been well over a year since the fight began. Many more people have moved into our area and complained about the Long Lines Building's noise. However, according to phone company sources, the only complainant *to them* has been "The Duane Street Residents Committee": all two of us.

But A.T.&T. installed a sound deadening device on the fans in October, reducing the noise quite a bit. Then they sent over an acoustics expert who reported that the sound now blends in with street noises and meets city requirements of 45 decibels. We're not entirely satisfied—we'd prefer it if the fans disappeared, but life is no longer unlivable. As for the phone company, they say they're going to try to reduce the noise even more. We're waiting. **—By Jean Bergantini Grillo**

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARRY O'ROURKE

El huge-o: N.Y. Telephone's Long Lines building.

Women who murder

Female murderers fall out of the legal system all along the way from investigation to conviction because male officials cannot believe women are violent

By Janet Kole

Joan Brown and her lover were having the same argument they had had a hundred times before. She wanted to keep the child she was carrying; he wanted her to have an abortion, and offered to pay for it. "I don't want to go through another abortion," she said. "My body can't stand it." He finished off his sixth beer of the afternoon, thoughtfully put down the can, and smashed his fist into her mouth. Then he walked away to put a record on the stereo.

Joan's hand went for the scissors on her sewing table, and before her lover had a chance to turn around, she had stabbed him twice, in the back. She heard a hiss as air escaped from his punctured left lung, and then he collapsed. She knew he was dead. As she turned to the telephone to call the police, she heard her young daughter crying in the next room. "Mommy, Mommy, what's wrong?" She dialed the police emergency number, asked for an ambulance, and reported to the sergeant on duty: "I just killed a man. You'd better hurry over." Then she washed her hands, and went in to comfort her child.

No one quite believes that women are capable of murder; psychological studies of the mind of the murderer rarely talk about women who murder. And yet, one-third of all women now in jail are serving time for homicide, a higher percentage than for any other crime. And there's more: figures comparing arrests to indictments indicate that there are many more women who have killed walking around today scot-free because none of the people involved in apprehending them—not witnesses, police, district attorneys, judges or juries— is able to deal with the concept of the violent woman.

Joan Brown, for example, despite the fact that she turned herself in, thereby admitting her guilt, never spent a day in jail. The police arrested her and charged her—they had to, since she reported it—but she was released on her own recognizance. The D.A. refused to press first-degree murder charges and instead took her to court on the charge of second-degree murder, manslaughter. "Basically, there is a sympathetic reaction to a woman who has killed someone she is sexually involved with," one Manhattan D.A. told me. "We definitely have a double standard with regard to the sex of the perpetrator." If a woman has children, the feeling is that "a woman belongs in her family. She's the weaker sex, she isn't tough enough to take jail."

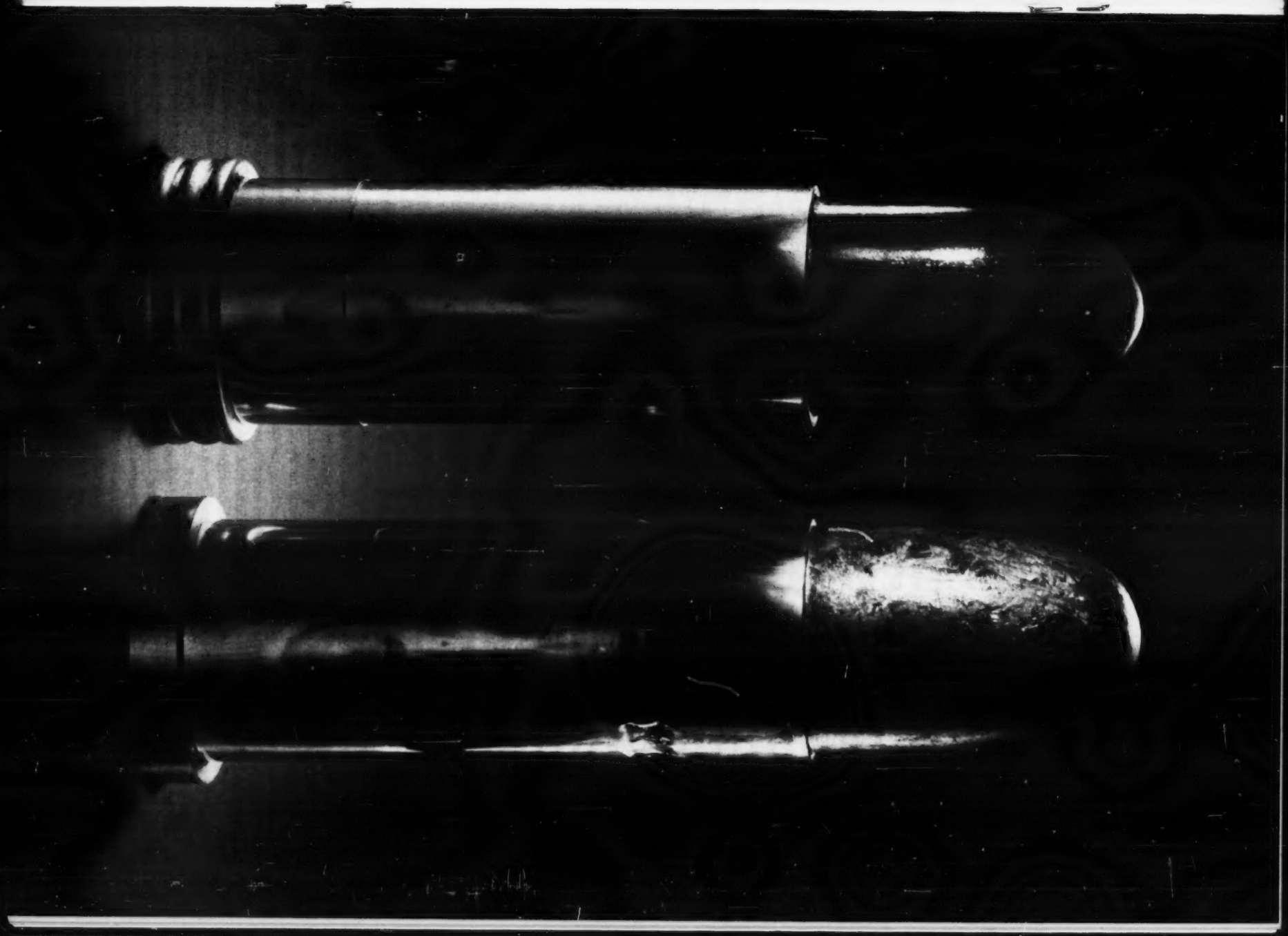
A sympathetic jury, led by the sympathetic prosecutor, was willing to find Joan Brown guilty if they could be assured that she would not be separated from her little girl. The judge in Joan's case was willing to make that tacit assurance, and when sentencing time came, he gave her the mandatory 10 to 15 year sentence, suspended. "There is a tendency, among both juries and judges, to be a little less strict with women. I know I am," said the judge. "Her family situation has a bearing on the kind of sentence a woman receives."

"There is a desire on the part of male judges to look for a reason for the crime, if the perpetrator is a woman," says Leslie Snyder, one of the few female D.A.s to serve in the Manhattan District Attorney's Homicide Division. "They want to make sure they return a woman to her family, and if they can emphasize certain facts and disregard others—like, she might be on drugs, for example—they'll do that. It's a sexist attitude that has worked to the 'benefit' of woman defendants." One woman attorney (a former D.A.) put it more succinctly: "Judges are chicken-shit about sentencing women to jail for murder."

There are many women like Joan Brown who have never gone to prison for the act of murder. Only the most obvious, unignorable crimes committed by women have been punished (like Lizzie Borden's 1892 hatchet spree on her family). But for most women, whose crimes are committed in a moment of rage against a husband or lover, keeping a low profile is enough to ensure either that the crime is hushed up or that their sentence is minimal. Even

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE COOPER

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE COOPER



when sociological studies of the judicial process were in their infancy, a report on homicide in New York State by J.V. De Porte and Elizabeth Parkhurst (Feb. 1935 issue of *Human Biology*) stated: "It is important to bear in mind . . . that these figures represent convictions and not indictments and that the relationship between the numbers for the two sexes very likely reflects the leniency often exercised by juries . . . when the person on trial is of the fair sex." The fact that in 1935 women were still being referred to with that Victorian cliche, "the fair sex," is an indication of why it has taken so long for women to be looked at realistically.

The dimensions of this reverse discrimination are awesome. The FBI estimates that 90 percent of all murder cases are "solved" by police—that is, they know who did it. But approximately 59 percent of the murderers responsible escape murder convictions. How many of those who escape conviction are women? There are five men arrested for every woman (last year, 4,000 women were arrested for murder); yet the proportion of males *convicted* of the same crime is much higher—about 14 to 1 (last year, only about 200 women went to jail for murder). If that many women are falling out of the system after arrest, it can only be surmised how many more escape arrest in the first place (especially since these figures reflect only half of all murders actually committed; the other half go unreported).

The men responsible for deciding whether or not to arrest a woman for murder—the police—stress their "sympathy" and compassion for the women in these cases. Lt. John Yucknes of New York City's First District Homicide Squad (the "real" lieutenant upon whom TV's Lt. Kojak is based—both are head of Manhattan South Homicide Division) told me: "Most of the women we see who have committed murder commit what we call 'domestic' homicides. The wife usually kills her husband—she just picks up what's handy, usually a kitchen knife, and sticks it into him. I'll tell you," he added thoughtfully, "they usually have a good reason for doing it." Lt. Edward Clarke, head of the NYPD's Homicide Analysis Unit, expanded on this theme: "I don't think the police are insensitive to the differences between a man and a woman; we tend to be more understanding with a woman. Women are the gentler sex; usually the woman would no more commit murder than . . . well, she just gets carried away."

A free-lance writer and photographer, Janet Kole is currently working on a book about women murderers.

The police aren't the only ones who go out of their way to be understanding. So do the friends and family of the murder victim, usually because they are friends and family of the woman as well. "Usually when a woman murders someone," said Lt. Clarke, "the people around her try to explain to us why it happened, more than they would if it were a man who did it. The witnesses probably feel it was justified, because she helped all of them in getting rid of a problem." If the female in question was arrested and taken to court, the police officer's natural sympathies would probably be evident in his testimony to both judge and jury. "I think juries are sympathetic to women," said Lt. Clarke. "I'm not saying women would get away with murder—but I know *I* would be sympathetic."

Most homicides in this country—70 to 80 percent of them, in fact—are what Lt. Yucknes calls "domestic" homicides, and the motivation follows a consistent pattern. Elaine Slade (not her real name), currently serving a life sentence for homicide (although she will be eligible for parole in three years), explained to me what was in her mind when she shot her lover:

"There is a sympathetic reaction to a woman who has killed someone she's sexually involved with. We definitely have a double standard"

"I'd been living with the man—a career soldier—for about a year. He came back from the base one night, and he'd been drinking, and we started to have a heated argument. We went out in the car to cool off, and suddenly he came at me, all 240 pounds of him, just going for me in a way that made me afraid he was going to kill me. Something just went inside of me. I grabbed his service pistol and shot him. When I realized what I'd done, I gunned the car for the Army base hospital. About 200 yards from the main gate, he just sort of rolled over and stopped breathing. I knew he was dead and I just freaked. I panicked. I pushed him out the door and turned the car around and headed back for our apartment.

"Afterwards I didn't feel anything. I was in shock. I was scared mainly. I couldn't believe I'd done it. When the police came, I lied. I pleaded not guilty in court, which was stupid. If I'd told it the way it happened, I might not be here now. When I was sentenced to life, it meant nothing to me. I was just in a daze.

"It didn't hit me until I was in prison for about nine months. Then I suddenly realized what it was going to be like to be in a prison for 13 years. I went berserk, and I left." She escaped to see her parents and was caught.

How did she feel about having committed murder?

"I loved the man," she said, "and he's dead. I have to accept that fact. I felt bad after it was over, but I can't bring him back. If I let myself dwell on what I did, I'd go crazy. I've accepted it, but I'm not going to keep thinking about it."

Is Elaine, or any of the thousands of women who have committed murder in this country, different from other women? What makes them, for that one numbing moment, take raw power into their hands and decide to take the life of another human being? Why is it only one little bit of added pressure that finally causes their whole being to short-circuit?

"I'm not different from anybody else," Elaine says. "I'm not a violent person. It takes a lot to make me mad. But if I'm pushed to the extreme, I react. Under the same set of circumstances, anyone would react the way I did."

Most psychologists would agree that any *woman* would react the way Elaine did—pushed to the edge, they will murder or, even more frequently, commit suicide (which women, who have been taught to sacrifice themselves for others, will do more readily than men). Murder and suicide are the two sides of the same coin; both are extremes of acting out hostility and frustration. Women are not allowed to voice frustration or rage in our society. They may weep or become depressed (and in fact depression—which is anger turned inward—is the refuge of most frustrated women in our culture, as today's busy psychiatrists will attest), but they must not be angry. And if they are not only angry but also cannot voice their hostilities, they become doubly frustrated. "It is a profound frustration not to be able to register one's feelings upon the face of the world," said Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*) in explaining the individual's need for violence. This double frustration, ironically, is exacerbated by the women's movement, which has raised women's expectations faster than societal conditions have been able to deal with them.

The situation most likely to produce frustration and a sense of impotence in a woman is staying home with the

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During the 1893 trial, hatchet murderer Lizzie Borden fainted when the prosecution produced the skulls of two victims, her father and stepmother.

children. Sociologist Richard J. Gelles says that the "child threatens or interferes with the mother's identity and esteem." The child keeps her from working outside the home, or even from having time to herself if she wants to stay at home. It is she who is usually saddled with the daily charge of the child, not the man. The child often becomes the focus for all the mother's hostility because he is closest to hand, and he is tangible proof that the woman is tied down to domestic duties and responsibilities. As might be expected, focusing rage on the child often leads to child battering and, in more extreme cases, murder. Women murder their children twice as often as do fathers (nationwide, women committed approximately 400 child murders last year).

It is perfectly understandable to most students of human psychology why a woman would murder a child if she is going to murder anyone, yet it is the one murder that society will not allow women to get away with. It may be just another violent crime to the law, but to our cultural value system, it is an abnormality, a hideous and unnatural act. In fact, certain European countries—Austria, Germany and Italy—distinguish legally between the act of child-killing by a man, which is lumped together with murder, and the act committed by a woman, which is called infanticide. The emotional charge of that word—*infanticide*—is much greater than for the word "murder." Why? Because it evokes the image of the nurturing mother with her infant, turning inside out her sacred duty to care for the child and willfully doing him damage instead. It goes to the heart of all that is considered feminine: a true woman feels pity and love for a helpless infant; only a monster could feel rage. And if woman as murderer is inconceivable to our society, then how much more a freak of nature is the mother who murders her own child.

"Anyone who would abuse or kill a child is sick," says one noted social psychologist, although an estimated 2 million children are battered every year in this country. Even women like Elaine, serving time for confessed homicide, feel antipathy for the child murderer. "I cannot condone a woman, or a man, who takes the life of a child," Elaine told me. "There are women in my cottage who have done that, and I think they're sick. I don't show them how I feel, but I can't understand it. I have a daughter. I can't relate to being violent with your own flesh and blood, someone who's weaker than you."

Cocktail waitress Alice Crimmins was crucified by the press when she was arrested in Manhattan for the murder of her two children in 1966. Her case became a *cause célèbre*; the New York City newspapers carried almost daily stories about the circumstances surrounding the alleged murders (the bodies were found, separately, dead of asphyxiation, near the Crimmins' home in Queens several days after she reported them missing). Snide references were made to the fact that Mrs. Crimmins was having an affair while still legally married (although she and her husband had been living apart for some time). She became the woman New York City loved to hate, despite the fact that the case against her was mainly circumstantial. She was hissed and booed by onlookers when she was escorted from jail to the courtroom and back, and the dailies gleefully did the same in print. Her trial by press was so blatant that her conviction on a charge of murder was eventually overturned by the court's appellate division.

These two opposing views of the woman-as-murderer—that she must be sympathized with, and that she is a horrifying freak—were played against each other very tellingly in a turn-of-the-cen-

tury murder case that shocked and titillated New Jersey newspaper readers. The three Wardlaw sisters committed, during the first decade of the new century, a series of obvious cold-blooded killings aimed at raising the women's failing financial situation through insurance policies (all of the victims were family members, including the husbands of the two married sisters). Although several of the deaths were suspicious, at no time were any of the sisters bothered by investigation or harassment from any official agency. They were safe, and would probably have remained so, had they not gone too far—they murdered the young, pretty daughter of one of the sisters, by drowning her in a bathtub. The public finally became incensed at these women, not because they had committed one killing too many, but because one of the murderers was the victim's own mother. The fact that these women had committed other equally horrible murders was considered only peripherally. What caught public awareness was that a mother-child relationship had been violated. What is more unnatural than to murder one's child?

Women's violence against those who frustrate their desires, ambitions and freedom is obviously not new; think of Medea. But rarely does one hear about these women, because our culture holds womanhood in "reverence" (one sees the image of the lady on the pedestal, her musculature too weak for her to move off it), and this reverence carries an element of condescension. Women are frail and childlike, and they must be protected. If a woman does something evil, she can't be blamed because she is a child. Woman has always been perceived as passive, and she supposedly uses this passivity in order to get what she wants—usually from or through a man. As a result, society has traditionally been unable to conceive of a woman as capable of murder, which is, after all, an active accomplishment. The upshot of all this is that the system—laws, mores and myth—has covered up for socially deviant women. Did a woman shoplift? She's sent home to her husband and reprimanded. Did she burn down her house? The police close the case as unsolved, and the woman quietly retires to a sanitarium. Did she poison her husband? The doctor says he died of a heart attack.

Women fall out of the legal system all along the way from investigation through arrest and indictment to conviction because of the unwillingness to believe that a woman can commit an act of pure aggression, that she is physically capable of violence against a man and emotionally capable of violence against a child. If she is caught for the latter atrocity, no excuse can be made for her; but if she is caught for the murder of a man, who is independent and can defend himself, she can be excused (or at least "understood"). Sixteenth century chivalry pops up with its explanations: woman is pure, man is

The FBI considers female terrorists the deadliest of all its "wanted" criminals

gross. He must have done something worth killing him for if a woman murdered him.

This chivalric code has been intellectualized, stamped with the "okay" of science, and presented to the world at large as "victimology," the theory that the victim acquiesces in his own murder: "There is a symbiotic relationship between the murderer and his victim, involving suggestibility and dependency and cooperation," says one noted expert in the field of homicidal psychiatry. This "understanding" of the male victim's role in his own death may stem from an unconscious guilt over the fact that our society has traditionally allowed men to assault their women without fear of repercussion. Police called in on husband-wife altercations usually will not arrest the man for battery until the woman has complained four or five times. Perhaps this is a *quid pro quo*—*he* gets away with assault, *she* gets away with murder.

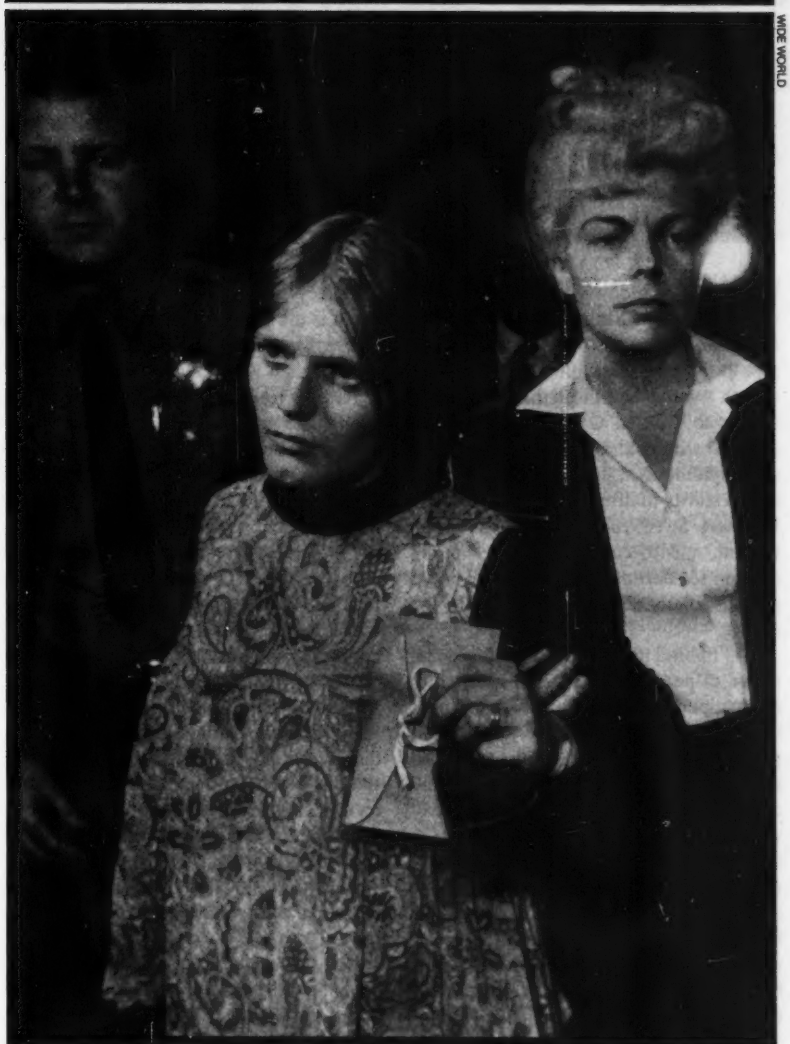
There is some truth to the theory of victim-induced homicide, of course, but its propounding obscures something much more important: what is going on in the mind of the woman who actually has committed the violent act. She is frustrated, she is driven to her limits of emotional endurance; how can she be kept from going over that limit? Surely the answer is not to keep protecting women from the consequences of their acts. True, these women are not dangerous killers who should be locked up for society's protection (nor are most men who commit domestic homicides, though they go to jail for it), but neither are they children whose pecadillos should be ignored. It is this equation of women with children that has caused most of these "intimate" murders in the first place. Says sociologist Robert N. Whitehurst, in an article on "Violence in Husband-Wife Interaction" (*Violence in the Family*): "Not until a generation of men and women reared under equalitarian (sic) conditions and subscribing to equalitarian instead of male-superiority norms can we expect a reduction in intersex violence. In the meantime, the struggle for equality and the struggle for the status quo will bring about an increase in violence."

UPI

Alice Crimmins' conviction for the murder of her two children was overturned on appeal because of the blatant trial by press in the N.Y.C. dailies.

Indeed, women's violence is on the increase on the home front. According to the FBI, 1.9 percent more women were arrested this year than last for domestic homicides, whereas only .5 percent more men were arrested. And in addition, more and more women have been forcing themselves into the limelight of violence, not on a personal but on a national scale, beginning with the Weatherwomen of the '60s and moving up to the '70s Symbionese Liberation Army. Says Lucinda Franks, the UPI reporter who painstakingly re-

WIDE WORLD



WIDE WORLD

Above: At the 1970 Sharon Tate murder trial, defendants Atkins, Krenwinkel and Van Houten smile for the cameras on their way into court. Below: Manson family member Linda Kasabian is escorted from the L.A. Hall of Justice after her arraignment.

searched the phenomenon of the middle class revolutionary after Diana Oughton blew herself up in the New York City brownstone: "Girls like Diana Oughton and Patricia Hearst and me and so many others grew up with a certain sense of impotence; so many of our attempts to demonstrate ourselves as individuals were frustrated that it seemed impossible to us that we would ever matter in the world that we were brought up in." That impotence, in a decade of middle-class terrorism against the establishment and women's raised consciousness, caused these women to dedicate themselves to an idealistic (though often lethal) violence, aimed not at individuals but at institutions.

And somewhere between these two—between the personal and the political—are those women who have decided to defend themselves against physical assaults. Just a few months ago, two young women in Florida were arrested on a charge of homicide. They were accused of strangling a man with a scarf. The women claimed self-defense; the man had held them at knife-point and raped them. As soon as they saw their chance, the two jumped him. They were acquitted. Still pending is a similar case in California, where 19-year-old Deborah Kantaeng allegedly fired a shotgun blast, as her father looked on, into the throat of a man she said had raped her.

These highly visible women are ramming home, as no account of domestic homicide can, the fact that women can assert themselves physically and violently. Whether to avenge a personal or a social wrong, they are taking up murder as a tool in the way that, throughout history, only men or "madwomen" have done. Perhaps Phyllis Chesler, controversial author of *Women and Madness*, is right: "Women have little power with which to either avoid or commit violence. Women traditionally are physically weak and politically powerless in a culture that values physical strength and its extended representation in the form of weaponry and money. Women, like men, must be capable of violence or self-defense before their refusal to use violence constitutes a free and moral choice, rather than 'making the best of a bad bargain.' "

The FBI considers female terrorists the deadliest of all its "wanted" criminals. When and if this fear of politically violent woman filters over to the impulsive domestically violent woman, the fear and its concomitant recognition of woman's strength may paradoxically bring us closer to the egalitarian utopia which will free women—and men—from the need to use violence. ●

An ex-bum's rush

John Maher—ex-addict, Synanon grad—believes that "trying to cure an addict in the slums is like trying to cure an alcoholic in a bar." To prove it, he's built San Francisco's Delancey Street into a powerful center for rehabilitation, business and politics—and built himself into "this year's radical chicie"

By Douglas Bauer

"When you're an absolute incompetent, you can either be a bum or a great social leader. I failed as a bum. I had no options."

—John Maher

Many people passing by have been mistaking it for a restaurant, which it was until a few weeks ago and which, even after a full remodeling, it still appears to be. Red curtains in accordion folds fill the lower half of windows, and pots of cascading Boston ferns hang above the curtains. Every window—those along the wall that give to the gas station on the other side of Eighth Avenue and those that look across Fulton to Golden Gate Park—is further adorned with gold capital letters arranged in a symmetrical hump: DELANCEY, with a sturdy platform beneath, STREET. Delancey Street *could* certainly be a restaurant, and to complete the deception, one can see dozens of those many-colored plastic Tiffany shades hanging from the ceiling.

Behind this misleading facade, a crowd of people has gathered to listen to instructions. They are clustered, knees touching, around round tables, standing in pinched rows against the walls, and leaning with crowded nonchalance against the room's beautifully curved bar like day workers waiting for the storefront office to open. One sees a stunningly varied assortment of people here, picked, it seems, by an advertising agency director wishing to fill his scene with an enlightenedly chosen mix. They are black and white and Latin-brown. They are men and women. They require mothers' milk and canes.

At the front of the room a man on a slightly raised stage, where the house band should be, begins to speak. His name is John Maher and he's the chairman of Delancey Street. The crowd quieting to listen is the present population of Delancey, a community of graduated felons, drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes and others representing professions of vice. Maher began Delancey nearly four years ago, after spending almost a decade at Synanon. He was born on New York City's Lower East Side and lived most of his early life in the South Bronx, where, at a prodigious age, he entered the commerce of the street, running numbers, fencing, then being promoted to dope, which he sold and used. He often visited eastern prisons, and knew Riker's Island especially well. His illegal work and needs led him finally to Synanon, where he eventually became a director. But he came to disagree with its belief that the place should be a permanent residence for members. Maher feels that the addict and the alcoholic and the thief can, with time and the nutriments of care, instruction and gradually easing discipline, stay with lawful work while remaining clean of chemicals.

And so, with a few friends from Synanon, Maher formed Delancey Street, which he named for a New York street that was filled in the 19th century with struggling, hopeful immigrants sure of finding America's bounty. To get the money necessary to start Delancey, Maher

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELLE VIGNES

Maher behind the wheel of his M.G. outside his Pacific Heights mansion, Russia.

applied at the bank he knew best and received a quick $1,000 from a neighborhood loan shark. As Delancey's word and reputation has spread through the drug communities and prisons, more and more people have come to Delancey so that tonight 300 residents fill its new dining hall to listen to Maher.

And that is always interesting. Maher has kept the full flavor of his Bronx accent. His voice is raspy, as if he will go hoarse with his next sentence, and carries the quick irritation of the city. And he is brilliantly profane, bringing a natural dexterity to the all-purpose word which appears at least twice in most every sentence.

Tonight, on the eve of November's elections in San Francisco, Maher is explaining to his people that Delancey Street has committed itself to work for a slate of candidates, to demonstrate its force as an organization able to gather winning votes. In return, Maher's thinking runs, the elected official will remember Delancey when bureaucratic mazes and misplaced files threaten to postpone one of its projects.

"OK," says Maher, pacing back and forth across the low stage, "I want yas to listen. I'm gonna ask ya to do some work you're not gonna like. But we gotta do this, 'cause it's gonna help all of us." He consults the paper in his hand, his Irish face looking alternately boyish and saggingly tired. "We're gonna do some work for a bunch of politicians tonight and tomorrow. Now we ain't workin' for any party. They'll both betray you.

"After supper, we want everybody to walk the districts and hang a list of our candidates on every doorknob. Then, in the morning, we want everybody on the street, gettin' people to vote and makin' sure they know who our guys are.

"Now I'm gonna explain who we're backin' and why. For governor, we're goin' with dat punk Brown. We're goin' with Brown because the Republicans made us no promises, and the Republican, Fluornoy, is the heir apparent to Reagan, who the only reason he shouldn't get cancer is because they got so many people workin' on a cure."

Maher's audience laughs and, like a stand-up comic feeling his crowd, Maher lifts his posture and continues. "For lieutenant governor, we're goin' with one of *us*." Pause for the curiosity to build. "We're goin' with a *thief*. Dymally's our man. Meryvn Dymally."

He looks once more at his list. "Now for controller, we're gonna switch parties, because we wanna show that we don't belong to no party and because the controller signs the checks and with all these Democrats gettin' elected, we want a Republican in there to watch the bastards. So Bagley is our man." He continues through his list: "For old times sake, and 'cause crooks gotta eat, too, we're supportin' the greatest clown in the history of American politics, Jess Unruh . . . for Congress, Willie Brown, he's a good friend and he may give us his old suits. . . ."

Maher also speaks of a proposition on the ballot, Proposition 10, which would give ex-felons the right to vote. "That one just scares the shit outta the politicians," he says, "because it means a block of 100,000 votes they gotta go after." Another proposition awards handsome pensions to firemen and policemen. "We shall support 'em. Then they'll owe us. . . . And we must look beyond our tiny prejudices."

Maher looks around the room and seems to take its measure. He pulls combing fingers through light brown hair and seems suddenly to draw smaller, to a tight, fierce concentration, as he says, "This election is important. It's not gonna change things overnight, but it's a beginning. The thinking in this country is gonna change and the motherfuckers who've kicked all us poor people around and who malign us and fuck wid us, they're gonna

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELLE VIGNES

be *out*! People think that a guy who shovels shit for a living shouldn't be as important, shouldn't make as much money as a fuckin' English professor. That really concerns some people. Well, I say, 'Ain't dat a bitch. Ain't dat a bitch.' They think that guys that work with their hands do it 'cause we're stupid assholes. They think that a guy sits on his ass all day and has been to college and has a ball teachin' English should get more than the poor bastard who sweeps streets. Well, I got news for them. It's the street sweepers and the janitors who keep their schools open. They could fire half the teachers and they'd still have school, but try runnin' a school without a toilet that works!

"The white collar assholes have tried to keep us stupid and confused and feeling inferior. Well, no more. I fail to see what value in this society a fuckin' insurance salesman has over a street sweeper. We're gonna help the street sweepers, and the shit shovelers, and the janitors, and in ten years it's gonna be *our* city! The *people's* city! This time we're not goin' to war with our beads, and the motherfuckers can either decide to help us . . . or we will DESTROY them!" He jams an angry fisted arm into the air and catches it at the elbow (Up Yours!) and steps from the platform into gleeful, convention-winning applause.

The forecasters had seen storms on vote day, but November 5 comes with a clean, bright warmth and many Delancey residents are pausing on the stoop and sidewalk of their Eighth Avenue entrance to feel some of this good sun and to watch the steady traffic of Delancey cars, trucks and vans. Delancey Street runs six profitable businesses—a restaurant on San Francisco's sophisticated carnival strip of Union Street, a construction company, a moving company, a garage, a plant store, an advertising specialties business. Their revenues, with the help of private and community donations, support Delancey's operation. All of the businesses are staffed solely by its people and all revenues are returned to the organization. It owns valuable real estate—this building at Eighth and Fulton with four stories of apartments above, two imperious homes amidst other mansions in the Pacific Heights neighborhood, and an apartment complex in Sausalito. Maher places his people in these settings because, he has often been quoted as saying, "Trying to cure an addict in the slums is like trying to cure an alcoholic in a bar"; he has surely given them new and gentle climates. With the same promotional cleverness that appears in many of Delancey's public acts (it recently sent a group of blacks dressed in Ku Klux Klan sheets to a city council meeting arguing for a resolution to ban all military-type uniforms from the backs of San Francisco's civil soldiers), Maher named the Eighth Avenue building "Egypt," the mansions "Russia" and "Estonia," and the Sausalito apartments "Puerto Rico."

Hal Fenton and Dick Kirshman at the ex-restaurant on Eighth Avenue: half the board is affectionately known as "squares."

Standing on the Eighth Avenue sidewalk, next to Egypt, a small black man named Howard, who always seems to be bending with rich laughter, watches his fellows parking and trotting busily inside, and others leaving and climbing into trucks and steering their vehicles back into the pace of the workday. All Delancey's buildings are nearly vacant this morning as teams walk the precincts, and those whose former sins are small enough are standing in line to vote in the church basement down the block.

Howard and I watch two men and a young woman leave Egypt and walk toward the polling place. Suddenly, the woman releases a high, condemning litany aimed at her companions. The men appear remarkably deaf to her insults, which are growing in pitch and ferocity to something near hysteria.

"Oooh, oooh," says Howard. "She's givin' them some kind of a haircut! That's what we call that, a 'haircut.' When you just let somebody have it like that. But she's wrong. She knows she's doin' wrong. You're supposed to keep those feelings inside you until you get in a 'game.' "

Delancey's games are one piece of philosophical luggage Maher carried with him from Synanon. They are a kind of group therapy turned to maximum volume, with all hostilities and simmering injustices let loose in a room so that a full emotional rinsing can take place. Games are played throughout the week. There are directors' games, for the men and women who run Delancey with Maher; tribal leaders' games, for residents who fill the jobs of middle management; group games; specially requested games arranged among people who've inflicted specific bruises. As Delancey has evolved, it has decided that new members need games three nights a week. The curriculum slackens as one demonstrates he can walk straight lines that run from mindless sweeping chores upward to real, public responsibilities, so after a time he plays games once a week, but just as intensely and with some expertise.

Howard bends and laughs and says softly, "She's gonna catch it next time she gets in a game. We'll beat her up! That's what we call it: 'beatin' somebody up.' " Howard pauses and strokes his chin. "She knows she's wrong, but sometimes things get kinda tense and it just don't matter."

I smile with him and watch the trio turn in at the church, the lady's shrill words coming back down the sidewalk only as a faint wail. During the five days I freely watched Delancey, this brief assault was the only one I saw. I heard much talk of games, most of it running to good-natured threats—"Wait until I get you in a game"—or schedule-balancing—"I've got games tonight. When do you play games? Maybe we could get together tomorrow." But I sensed nothing like nervousness or ill-ease as members approached them, rather almost a pleasant eagerness, and I know that on every Delancey premises I

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felt a calm, palpably honest harmony that I've never similarly felt in company conference rooms or at large, liquid socializings among good friends.

Howard, from Detroit, has lived at Delancey since February (one agrees to give Delancey two years when he signs on) and has been in prison throughout his adult life.

"I spent about 14 years in prison, in Detroit and out here. Lot of time in Q [San Quentin]. . . . It seems like I just couldn't stay out. . . . Narcotics. Every time I'd get out of jail, I'd say to myself, 'Well, Howard, now your troubles are behind you.' But damned if I wouldn't look up and they just kept bein' *ahead* of me."

A schoolroom blackboard hangs behind Egypt's front desk, serving as a constantly changing bulletin center for Delancey Street. Early phone messages are chalked in big letters, then moved and made smaller as fresher news arrives, then forced finally into a corner as the day fills the board. Today, however, a large boxed message—NO GAMES TONIGHT—holds a central place all day. With everyone patrolling for truant voters until 8:00 o'clock, there will be little time and energy for games.

The lounge and dining room are quiet at 3:00 p.m., feeling something like an empty fraternity house in mid-afternoon. I'm drinking the day's 43rd cup of conversational coffee with Hal Fenton, a member of Delancey's board and a friend of Maher's from their Synanon days. Fenton is a tall, gregarious man with sleek silver wings of hair combed back from his temples. Before he settled into a profitable real estate business, he spent younger years as a road musician and comedian and remembers playing drums on the very stage from which Maher spoke last night when this room was the El Portal nightclub. Fenton's memories are broken as Maher appears and pulls a chair to our table.

"I need some cash," he says to Fenton. "So I'm gonna get a $40,000, 90-day loan at 13 percent. I figure, what's 13 percent for 90 days. It's nothin'."

"What for? The new apartments?"

"We think we can take over Sausalito," says Maher. ". . . The victory itself won't mean nothin', but if you can do it in Sausalito, you can do it, say, in Philadelphia"

asks Fenton.

"Yeah."

Delancey has just aquired more apartments near its Puerto Rico complex and Maher must now find financing.

"How's our cash situation?" asks Fenton.

"I gotta use the cash for two trucks we're buying. If I pay cash for the trucks, I can get 'em quick, right off the lot."

"I talked to Bob the other day," says Fenton. "He's anxious to move in."

Maher with San Francisco Sheriff Richard Hongisto: "We gotta be able to defend ourselves."

"He's *gotta* move in. We'll float him for free for a while if we have to." Maher turns to me and explains, "This friend of ours, he's runnin' for da school board in Sausalito and it's gonna be very interesting 'cause the guy he's runnin' against got him fired from his job as a teacher in the school system over there. Some bullshit about him teachin' subversive stuff. Our friend's a black guy and things got pretty hot over there for a while. Death threats. . . . He got reinstated. So now, he's runnin' in this election and you gotta live in a certain district where our apartments are."

"Ya see," says Maher, and his eyes begin to flutter excitedly, "we think we can take over Sausalito. There's only 3,100 registered voters in the whole town. We figure, we move about a thousand ex-cons into town and they establish residence there, in our places. Before long our guys'll be in government jobs, runnin' the schools, and we'll take over the police department so any FBI goons come around dey gotta work through local officials, which'll be us." He explains the plan in a way that makes it sound neatly certain.

"What will happen if you can take over Sausalito?" I ask.

"Two things. First, bona fide Americans who've always said, 'Use the system,' will stand up and applaud because we've shown them that things can be changed, and won. And the true libertarian conservatives will also stand up and applaud because they'll understand that this is an act of free will by free men and that we would hope that the country isn't turned into a giant bureaucratic cesspool."

"Discounting those five people," I say, "what will happen?"

"Right," he laughs, "you got it. Vast hordes of dingbats will just go bananas. The professional grant hustlers will scream that we've sold out—while they are drawin' government salaries—because we've co-opted the machinery, therefore we're co-opted. And endless numbers of fucking middle class dingalings will begin screamin', 'Dey are *destroyin*' da place!' We're not gonna destroy anything. We'll just transfer who's makin' the money on the businesses—which is a great old American tradition.

"The victory itself won't mean nothin', but over a long period of time what it'll mean is that, if you can do it in Sausalito, you can do it, say, in Philadelphia. You might not be able to do it as quick, or as slick, or as smart, but you can do it."

After dinner, Delancey's color television set is moved into the lounge to show

election returns. After a full day on the city's alpine streets, most of Delancey's people fall limply into chairs as early clues to the margin of rout come on the screen. They impatiently ask the screen for local returns, but when the first reports from San Francisco show winners that coincide with Delancey's slate, there is only quiet, isolated celebration from one woman on the couch, another in a chair. Perhaps the others are simply too tired.

At the end of the couch, an old man rests, his thin, black cane leaning against the furniture's arm. His skin is a deeply polished black, and a crudely healed scar, a violent tattoo, runs a river's course down the bridge of his nose. On both lapels of his jacket he wears buttons that say, "46 Years Is Enough." His name is Bob Wells, and the buttons refer to the length of time he lived in prisons. He was a versatile criminal in his young and active years, performing assorted robberies and assaults, and then, while a prisoner, he lost his quick temper and threw a heavy spittoon at a guard. That act was considered murderous and worth death row. He waited there for 10 years and more, and then his sentence was altered to "Life, without possibility of parole." Finally, last summer, after the newspapers found him, publicity grew—hence the buttons—and the courts ruled such purgatory unconstitutional. He was released to Delancey and they sent a limousine for him.

"All those years," he says in a rumbling voice, "they tried to work on me in a lot of ways." He shifts in his chair and moves the cane to the other hip, a certain survivor's nobility about him. "The thing that kept me goin' was my music . . . my trumpet. I loved to play my trumpet, and in all that time they never took it away from me . . . . If they'd've taken my trumpet, they'da broke me."

On the morning following the elections, Maher emerges from a meeting in his lounge, a large room at the top of "Russia," where Delancey's business offices are stacked four floors high. Maher and his lady, Mimi, a small, warmly vibrant woman who works as a sort of good and humane Haldeman, keep modest living quarters here. The lounge is filled with sun from a huge window that looks out over the city's steep, roof-topped undulations to the bay. Long couches seem to be everywhere in the room and make it feel like a furniture showroom.

In an outer office, Maher and Dick Kirshman, a Delancey director, are still wrestling with the problem of that $40,000 loan and the precise collateral that would guarantee it. Kirshman, like half of Delancey's board, became a friend of the place although he has no personal history of drugs or larceny. These directors with pure pasts are called, with affection, "squares." Maher deals daily with certain inconveniences inherent in confronting sober moneylenders and highly suspicious actuaries when representing the expanding needs of businesses run by thieves and addicts. So he feels little uncertainty that he'll get his loan. He is, in fact, perhaps feeling like something of a moneylender himself this morning, one dealing in political currency and watching his loans come due. For every candidate supported by Delancey Street carried San Francisco last night, and all but one, the Republican running for controller, won office.

"*Everybody's* our enemy. . . . People get crazy when you tell them they're your enemy. '*I'm* not your enemy,' they say. 'I was in civil rights when you were just a twirp!' "

"Last night at all those victory parties," he says to Kirshman, "people from the staffs kept comin' up to me and they'd say, 'I want to thank you, John, for your tremendous help. But isn't it a shame, really, isn't it a shame that you had to get involved in these campaigns and divert Delancey Street from its real purpose—curing addicts.' " Maher laughs and says, "You know what that means."

"It means they're scared of us," says Kirshman.

"Scared to fucking death," says Maher. "It's not the politicians themselves that said it. It's the people workin' for them, these patronage assholes who've been running campaigns for years and makin' a lotta money doing it. Now they see the politicians coming to Delancey Street and we're doing it better." Kirshman nods agreement.

"The firemen called to thank us," says Maher. "Their pension thing carried. So they know who helped 'em. . . . And in the only race where we went against big labor, we won that one, too."

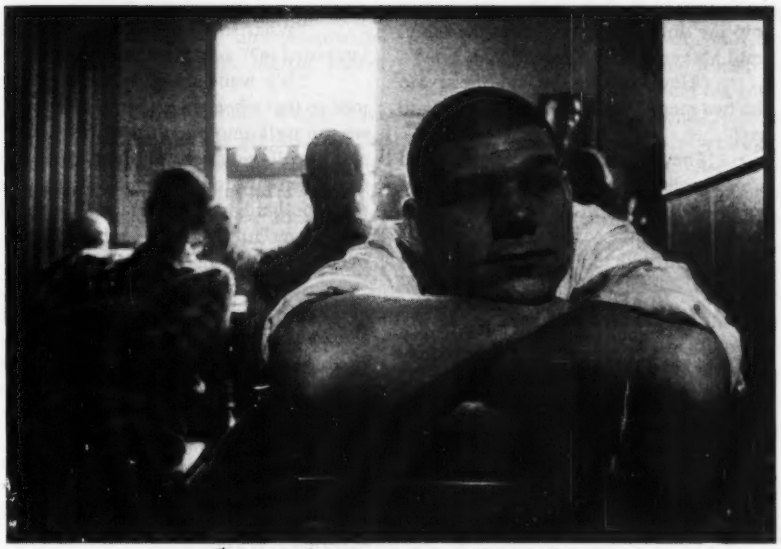
Maher chuckles fully. "There was madness in the streets last night. Total madness. Our boys, you know, our boys ain't too sophisticated. They never done this sort of thing before. So they come up to some poor bastard with his wife and kids and they say, 'Hey! C'mere!' And the bastard's scared to death that he's gonna get seriously fucked with. Then our guy says, 'You vote yet?' "

Later in the day, Maher and I sit comfortably in his busy lounge, with its phone buzzing harshly, and I am filled with questions: disconnected pieces and small puzzlements, really, that need an order, coming upon a magazine page with the answers to a quiz before you've seen its questions.

"Why have you gotten Delancey Street so involved with politics?" I ask.

"First, ya gotta understand that our political thing, whatever you call it, and Delancey Street, Inc., are separate. We have to do it that way, for tax reasons and other reasons. The political clubs, as we

Delancey Street's warehouse on Pier 41: the redwood had been donated for renovations.



Delancey Street residents at "games"—
philosophical luggage from Synanon.

call 'em, have no corporate connection with the Delancey Street Foundation.

"We work in politics 'cause the organization bums who've been runnin' this city for years, the Alioto creeps, they been fuckin' with the poor people, the old people, the minorities, and dat's gotta change.

"And, if I'm runnin' businesses to help cure drug addicts and help ex-cons and I own buildings and require various permits, well it's obvious to me that such things as postal service, fire service, police service, sewage service, tenant-landlord relations are all essential questions if I'm to keep goin'. And in big cities in America, unfortunately, that means that you gotta have political influence."

"You talk about taking over cities, things like that. Where do you think this is all going to end up?"

"It's not gonna end up," he says in a soft, matter-of-fact voice. "We don't think in those terms and that's why we've been so successful. We're not some kind of corporation with five-year growth plans and that kind of bullshit. So where it will end up is either we'll be destroyed or we will continue to grow. We're like a clan, or a group of cossacks roaming around. If the clan takes a beating, we'll move down the block and lick our wounds. If the clan has a victory, it will spread into new areas."

"Well, who will destroy you? Who are your enemies?"

"*Everybody's* our enemy," says Maher, lighting a Marlboro. "That sounds paranoid, I know, but everyone is our enemy. It's not that they're direct enemies. People get crazy when you tell them they're your enemy. '*I'm* not your enemy,' they say. 'I was in civil rights when you were just a twerp!' But poor people do not have the subtle distinctions of the upper classes, who can say, 'Well, it's just Rocky and I jousting over oil rights in Venezuela. No matter who wins, we'll still be in the club together.' Anybody who competes with us for jobs, for funds, is our enemy.

"But, really, until they comprehend that we are not going to rape their daughters, the more uptight members of the upper class are against us. And we also will no doubt get some cries of outrage from the worshippers of impotence on the Left, because we feed people and get jobs and that makes them jealous.

"In our society," he says, sharp and angry sarcasm on every word now, "anything that's effective is considered not beautiful. In other words, the most beautiful thing in America, according to the current crop of intellectuals, is a totally effete, self-questioning, doubting neurotic asshole, who's beautiful because he never makes a decision or implants a value. The kind of guy who says," and Maher shifts to an arched-eyebrow condescension, " 'Who are you, really, to lay your trip on the dope peddler down the block?' Well, I say, 'We're the citizens of the United States, *dat's* who we are. We gotta live wid dese assholes!' "

"So some liberals and some conservatives are against you."

"Yeah. The cranks. Just the cranks."

"Well, then, when people ask you where your politics fall, what do you say?"

"All we can say is that we're *people*. See, the problem is, what we do has no application to most of the people in this country, who aren't ex-cons, or former addicts or alkies, or whatever, and who do not desperately need a place like Delancey Street. So their questions, and we don't mean to be rude, but their questions just don't apply. It's like, Americans who go around the world, maybe they go to Africa and they ask the natives, 'Why are you guys doin' this?' And the African guy says, 'Well, dis is what we got goin', man. Dis is what we do.' And the American guy says, 'Well, wouldn't it be better if you *voted* on things?' And the African guy says, 'No, man, we couldn't have a vote here. Ya see, if we took a vote here, half of us still believe in voodoo, and we need penicillin. And if we took a vote, we'd get cupie dolls and dose of us wid any smarts, we don't want dese fuckin' Kewpie dolls. We want penicillin, ya understand?' At which point the American liberal gets horrified and says, 'Do you mean you don't believe in the democratic process?'

"And that's the way it is with us, see. We're like a tribe of Africans to most Americans. . . . From our position, it's like ya got two guys fightin' in the ring—the liberal and the conservative, and we're watchin', see, but our problem is not which one of dese guys to favor but that they're fightin' in the first place instead of payin' attention to us. I mean, we have no way of knowing what these nuts are gonna do. If there's a socialist government that is repressively bureaucratic, we've got to be prepared to feed ourselves. If there's a swing toward big business, we've gotta be able to defend ourselves. We can't trust *either* of them."

Maher has seemed this week in conversation to periodically flirt with the scenario of real violence somewhere down the road and I wonder what he means when he says his people have to be prepared to defend themselves.

"Well, we haven't been asked to literally defend ourselves, but we gotta be prepared to do that. See, people in this country wanna forget that in the '30s and in the '20s people were being marched to jail by big companies. Honest union leaders were being gunned down by goons. If we forget that, we're crazy.

"Of course, man should not be involved in violence," he says calmly, through Marlboro smoke. "It's kinda childish. *But*," and he is suddenly angry again, "he should certainly be able, if leapt upon by a *nut*, to git ridda da nut, to defend his fuckin' life!"

"What sort of local hostility have you felt?"

"Police raid me. . . . Right now, across the street in that mansion on the corner, there's a camera watching this place. . . . We've had fires on our property. The foundations write to us and say, 'If you'll move outta those groovy build-

ings we'll give you some money.' That kind of thing.

"But you see," he says conspiratorially, leaning forward, "we got a tremendous advantage over all these organized nuts because we got nothin' to lose. If we lose everything, we still got what we started with, and in the process of the war, if the nuts lose half of what they got, they're dead. . . . See, whether Delancey Street shrinks or gets bigger, it's permanent. And we can wait."

Maher's secretary enters the room and reminds him that he's late for a luncheon date with two men from a city convict rehabilitation program.

"Right!" he says, and jumps up, grabbing his coat and frisking himself frantically to check for packs of Marlboros.

"C'mon," he says to me and scurries down four flights of stairs as if the building were on fire. Inside his M.G., shouting over the engine noise, I say, "You know, some people are talking about your running for mayor."

"Yeah. Well, I'm this year's radical chicie." (His appearance on *60 Minutes* drew literally hundreds of personally addressed letters and there is talk of a movie of his life, starring Stacy Keach.) "All I gotta do is say 'motherfucker' in public a few times a day and the kids and the socialites love me. This town don't have no real celebrities, so they gotta create *un*celebrities.

"But the talk about mayor is crazy. I have to be very careful not to put myself in positions where it can be said that Delancey Street has been used to further my own ambitions. People are always sayin', 'What's in this for you?' I don't know. I feel better bein' a big shot, yellin' a lot and feelin' like I did some good."

"If you put a label on some of the flamboyant stuff you do, what would you call it? An ego trip?"

"I guess," he laughs. "Who knows. It gives me a sense of self-importance." He carefully releases the clutch at the top of a hill and the M.G. roars. "I'll tell ya this. Bein' a gadfly is certainly more fun and more humorous than bein' a fuckin' plumber."

"I'm sure," I yell above the motor, "you're gonna face the political pressure more and more."

"Yeah, I'll face it. But the guys with the big titles, they get trapped by the configurations of the jobs. Ya know? If I was lucky and out of sheer disgust I slapped everybody in the face and I woke up tomorrow and I was president . . . I mean, I'm a nice guy, but I can't run the fuckin' country. It's that simple."

We park the car in front of Egypt and hurry back through the lounge, turn into the dining room and scan the tables until Maher sees his appointment.

"Hey, I'm sorry I'm late," he says to the two men. "You guys get something to eat?"

They say that they have eaten, and after introductions Maher moves them to a large round table in a quiet corner of the room. One of the visitors, a thin, black-haired man with dark circles under his eyes, explains his program's plan to bring ex-convicts work in city jobs. His name is Michael, and he is a former convict. The other man, with long, frizzy hair that hangs from his head like a beagle's ears, is Michael's boss. As they sell their proposal, Maher nods at the appropriate conversational pauses and periodically says "uh huh," as some people do when their minds are elsewhere, and I'm certain that he's preoccupied with the day's problems. For one of Delancey's trucks was wrecked this morning, sending his insurance rates still higher, and the garage door at the service center was rammed and destroyed last night, a reply, Maher feels certain, to his selective politicking.

"What is necessary is a national movement that is not defined by ideology, but the ideology comes out of the experience of the movement, on simple ethical principles that all Americans can relate to, like, for instance, the Constitution. . . ."

Maher's mood suddenly changes and he says crisply, "All right. What can we do for you gentlemen?"

"Well, John. Right now, I'm looking for a volunteer to help me in the office," says Michael. "I'm looking for a guy with street sense. Not just a glorified ex-con. I want somebody who can sift through all the bullshit."

"You know," says Maher, "I just paid a million bucks for this building. I'm $25,000 in the hole, and I've got to make that money back. I can't really afford to send you a volunteer right now. Our people need jobs. And I'm not talking about jobs at the end of a mop."

"What sort of jobs are you most interested in?" asks Michael's boss.

"We want six building inspector jobs so that when we get screwed around, we can walk into one of their restaurants and slap 30 violations on them. We want to put ten guys on the police force, have them be hard hats and crack skulls and yell 'nigger' for five years so they can take over the Police Officers' Association. . . ."

After some closing conversation, everyone rises and Maher says, "We should, you know, stay in touch. We might be able to help each other out." They leave through the dining room's glass deco doors and Maher says to me, "You know, it's kinda crazy. Here's these two guys who ain't got no money talkin' about the community bein' plugged into them so they can *coordinate*. . . . Dey got no funds. No experience. It's crazy."

"I thought you had just tuned them out at first," I admit.

"Nah, nah. You gotta listen to what they say. See, they're talking about all this money comin' and so you ask 'em, 'When?' and they say, 'February.' And then you ask 'em how much and they say, 'Oh, a small grant. Thirty-five thousand.' And yet they're supposed to represent the entire community.

"It just proves that if you say something often enough, people are gonna believe it. I have no doubt that we could get up tomorrow and say, 'We speak for the cowboys of Wyoming!' and half the cowboys in Wyoming would say, 'Tank god we finally got a leader. Now we can get something done here.'

"And this other guy talks about wanting somebody with 'street sense.' What he means by that is that he wants somebody they can use to tell some great fuckin' horror stories that'll impress the shit out of the middle class and get 'em to give money. He says he don't want a glorified ex-con, but it seems to me he's precisely what he says he doesn't want—a glorified ex-con."

So Maher has concluded, had, in fact, determined five minutes into the pitchmen's Muzak, that they have no money, no jobs and no political influence.

"But I'll send them a letter," he says. "You always send the letter. Because then you can use the letter to manipulate them when the foundations come back to you and say, 'I see you sent a letter for Armpit House or Day Flop Lodge. So what about them, *really*?'

"These guys say they got no funds now." He shakes his head and rubs a Marlboro into the ashtray. "No funds. . . . You know, Adolf Hitler started with no funding. Took over all Europe in seven

years. No funding. Unbelievable. Mao Tse-Tung? Not a fuckin' dime. Castro? All of Cuba. No funding. Martin Luther King? No funding.

"See funding's place is *after*. Like Delancey Street could at this time be funded, if the funds were such that you had to account for them fiscally but you didn't have to account for policy. Why? Because it's already proven that it works. But if they'd've given me a million dollars three years ago, they'da said, 'Youse all gotta piss in a bottle, youse all gotta sign dese forms. Ya can't take dese kinds of people because they don't fit the computer setup, and you mustn't do dis, dis, dis and dis, but otherwise you can do anything you want and everything's groovy.' And we never would've grown."

He's found that groove of articulate outrage once more and, straight up in his chair, says, "All movements—good or bad—gotta start unfunded so they can prove that they're strong and viable. What is necessary is a national movement that is not defined by ideology, but the ideology comes out of the experience of the movement, on simple ethical principles that all Americans can relate to, like, for instance, the Constitution of the United States. Ain't dat a thought? That people might actually live and relate to each other according to constitutional principles? You know, everybody gettin' the same treatment whether he's old, or poor, or crippled. . . . Franklin Delano Roosevelt, if he wasn't rich, woulda spent his entire life riding around Laguna Honda Hospital in a wheelchair and goin' to *batik* class!"

Quieter now, he says reflectively, "Street sense! The whole glorification of the pimp is such bullshit. I remember one of the great experiences of my life. I come out of jail one time. I was on 47th and Broadway, I wanted to buy some dope; right? I didn't have any money. I had 10 dollars, whatever you come out of jail with. And there's this old pimp standin' there. He wasn't a big-time flash pimp, he was old, had a couple a broads workin'. And he looks at me and says, 'Ya wanna fix?' 'Ya, I wanna fix. Of course I wanna fix.' It's rainin'. So I'm waitin' in this coffee shop on 47th Street and the guy finally threw us out because he's loaded and nodding in the coffee and afraid a cop's comin'. So here we are standin' under dis awning in the rain. Rain splashin' all around us. And the broad comes down with a trick. Fuckin' broad's missin' two teeth. Kinda pretty if you like that garish bleached, whole body bleached, right?

"The trick comes down wearin' one of those obviously $300 suits, jumps in a big Lincoln and drives away. We're standin' in the fuckin' rain and the broad's got $25, which used to be a big score, and the broad says, 'I hate them fuckin' suckers.' And the pimp says, 'Yeah, them motherfuckers.' And they're talkin' about how easy they are to take, and I'm sayin' to myself, 'Here dis guy's wife is upstairs in this bedbug-ridden fleabag catchin' the clap from dis prick, and dis prick just gave 'im as much money as he gives the headwaiter at La Grenouille for the use of his wife for 30 minutes, and we're standing in the rain like drowning rats.

"And it dawned on me that *we're* the real assholes. The trick probably owns the hotel this pimp just paid rent on, or the coffee shop dat just threw us out, or the awning company we're standing under here!"

We leave the dining room for Maher's next appointment at Russia. Outside, he points to campaign posters wrapped around telephone poles on Fulton Avenue. He's reminded of Delancy's newest project, a plan to start a contract printing business. "See all these signs?" he says to me. "Why didn't we print all these signs? Shoulda thought of it sooner. 'Vote for Schmolowitz.' Why not? There's no reason why they shouldn't buy all their buttons, all that shit off of us. . . .

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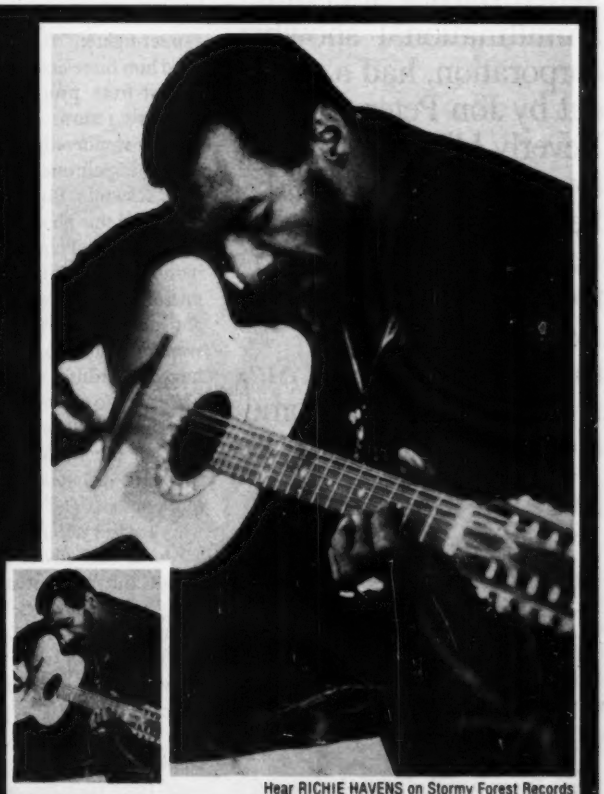

Hear RICHIE HAVENS on Stormy Forest Records

Collision on "Rainbow Road"

When Barbra Streisand, a multinational showbiz corporation, had a wig cut by Jon Peters, a Beverly Hills hairdresser, love blossomed. So did Peters, who took over Barbra's life and then took over her next film, *Rainbow Road*, a $5 million remake of *A Star Is Born* that has become Hollywood's biggest joke

By Marie Brenner

It's an early November morning in Beverly Hills and hairdresser Jon Peters is on the phone with Hollywood powerhouse agent Sue Mengers. "Yeah, uh, uh huh . . . that's all you can get?" Peters asks. He stares at himself in the full-length mirror, oblivious to the scene around him: women in smocks having their hair washed, blown out, curled and frosted. "OK, OK, OK." Peters, a self-styled "street-fighter," is, for once, listening. Behind him three assistants are standing over a hair-frost process, waiting for their teacher's return. A minute ago, Valerie Perrine wandered through the door without an appointment and upset the morning's schedule. But these are minor problems, and this phone call is business.

So Jon Peters is tugging at his black hair, checking himself out in the silvery mirror by the reception desk. Today he's got on the brown and gold checked sweater, platform saddle shoes and hip-hugging corduroys without underwear. He half turns to see if his extra ten pounds of newly acquired movie mogul girth show. And all the while, he's listening to Sue Mengers. Because this morning he has more on his mind than the streaked blond who worries about getting it on with her gardener (his advice to her: "Go ahead, break out, forget the old-fashioned ways"). For ten years, he's cut hair and put up with the *tsouris* of Bel-Air housewives and Hollywood stars, but now he's taking his own advice and doing a little break-out himself.

Not so little, really. At 30, the chunky half-Italian, half-Cherokee has risen from no status as " a kid with dirty underwear going to beauty school" to hair stylist, to husband to actress Leslie Ann Warren (*Mission Impossible*), to shop-owner, to hair stylist for Barbra Streisand, to boyfriend of Barbra Streisand, to roommate of Barbra Streisand, to record producer for Streisand's new album, *Butterfly*, to Streisand's movie producer. Only the big plum is left—and Sue Mengers is delivering it by phone to the Emperor of Hair on Rodeo Drive: Peters, already the producer of Streisand's and First Artists-Warner Brothers' $5 million musical for 1975, the fourth version of *A Star Is Born*, is to become the director as well.

And as new director Jon Peters will later say: "The whole world is waiting to see Barbra's and my story." And with filming starting this spring, the whole world is going to have its chance soon enough.

The only problem for Jon and Barbra was convincing Warner Brothers to let them have their fun.

Fall, 1973

John Dunne and Joan Didion have an idea. Why not write a movie about two rock singers, one on the way up, one on the way down? Make it a love story, make it a tragedy. So, being real writers, they call up their ex-agent, Dick Shepherd, now head of production at Warner Brothers. "What a good idea," Shepherd says. "I wonder

Marie Brenner, a film industry escapee, is at work on a novel.

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON

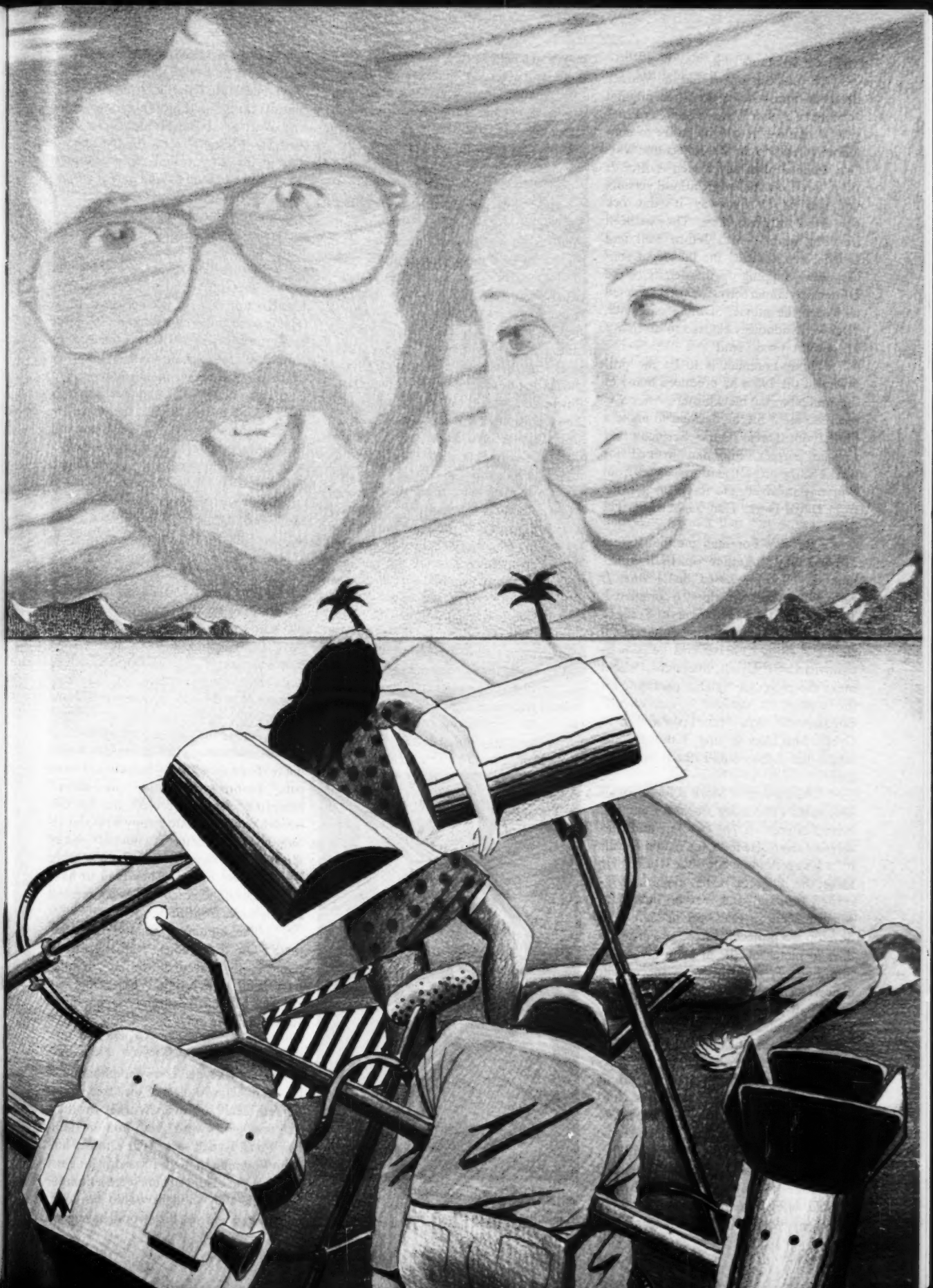

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON

why we didn't think of it."

It just so happens that the Warner Brothers library holds the three original versions of *A Star Is Born*. Shepherd suggests a remake; it will be easier to convince Warners to do the project that way. The Dunnes have never seen *A Star Is Born*, not even the Judy Garland version, not even on TV. Anyway, it's the rock world that interests them. They've been traveling around with Jethro Tull and Uriah Heep, cruising the late-night concert scene, lapping up the details of the Glitter City underbelly. "Warners wanted us to see the movie," Dunne said later. "But we assiduously refused to do it. We knew what it was about."

John Foreman is to be the producer. In the 1960s he produced many of the Paul Newman blockbusters. After *Serpico* became a hit, he decided to make a film about David Durk, Serpico's Ivy League partner. Foreman worked for weeks on the project, getting releases from everyone involved. He forgot to get one from David Durk. That movie never got made.

But now Foreman and the Dunnes are working together on their rockumentary, loosely based on *A Star Is Born*. A first draft screenplay is completed. They submit it to Sue Mengers of Creative Management Associates, hoping she'll shuttle it along to her clients Peter Bogdanovich and Cybill Shepherd, who'd make the project a "salable package" for the studios. "I thought it was awful," Bogdanovich says. "But I showed it to Cybill. She likes to sing. I thought she might like it. She didn't like it much either."

Along comes Mark Rydell, sometime actor (*The Long Goodbye*) and the kinetic director of *The Cowboys* and *Cinderella Liberty*. He loves the material, calls it "a savage look at the rock world." He loves the Dunnes, calls them "frighteningly brilliant." But Warners offers him squat for his services. So he agrees to develop the project for free; he's given 90 days to punch up the first draft, cast the film, and get some of those spectacular concert scenes off the drawing board. If he can do all this, he gets to direct the film. For good money. "My agents thought it would work out," he'll explain later.

Somewhere in the deep background, Jon Peters is making space in his closet for Barbra Streisand's clothes. Until he was hired to cut the wig she wore in *For Pete's Sake*, Barbra was sitting home nights, watching TV and playing with her son, Jason. The temperamental Streisand had gone through every hairdresser around when Peters was called in on an emergency basis. "She kept me waiting an hour and a half," Peters will recall. "I said, don't you ever do that again." Barbra liked that: a man who took charge of things. A change from the yes-men and ego-massagers who only fueled every neurosis. So now she's moving in.

April, 1974

Moving into the foreground now, Jon Peters is working with Barbra Streisand recording her *Butterfly* album. It is something of a departure from the standard Streisand fare. Jon Peters has decided there is a problem with Barbra's image: dowdiness. She needs to open up, free herself. With a shot of rhythm and blues. Barbra has been playing "Ray Stark's mother-in-law" for too long. Time she started to groove—with reggae, David Bowie and "Let the Good Times Roll." And Jon as the producer. Beautiful. Even Columbia Records thinks so. It's just that they're having some problems getting their vision on tape.

Meanwhile over at the *Rainbow Road* offices—that's what they're calling *A Star Is Born* now—Rydell and the Dunnes are having trouble finding a cast. Richard Perry, the music producer, is brought in to help out. "Rydell wanted it to be a total collaboration," Perry will recall. "I suggested everybody from Minnelli to Elvis." Casting is not the only problem, though. Perry doesn't like the script: "It really didn't catch the contemporary rock-pop milieu. Everything in it was cliched. That's when I got misgivings."

An increasingly frantic Rydell pushes for Carly Simon and James Taylor. They demur, saying it's "too close to their relationship." Rydell pushes next for Diana Ross and Alan Price (*Oh, Lucky Man*) but Motown's Berry Gordy, who controls Diana Ross, turns him down cold. And Warners considers Alan Price "too esoteric." Warners wants its own record stars in the film so that the soundtrack album will clean up for the parent corporation.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JILL KREMENTZ

Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne: "Relieved to be out of it."

Rydell is running out of time and everyone—Warner Brothers, the Dunnes, John Foreman—is hocking him to "get it on" (Hollywood jargon for making the project happen, already). They settle on Kris Kristofferson for the male lead. But a female star cannot be found and the cameras are supposed to start rolling in September; Warner Brothers is short on product for 1975. *Rainbow Road* could be a '75 Christmas biggie. If only there were a female lead. Forget the fact that there are 20 songs to write, approve, arrange and stage. And a screenplay still needing a rewrite. And complicated concerts to plan. Warners wants those cameras rolling. It still hasn't occurred to anyone that the first three versions of *A Star Is Born* never made a dime.

May, 1974

Jon Peters and Barbra Streisand are working on the modeling of Peters' ranch house in Malibu. *Butterfly* has been salvaged by calling in Kathy Kasper, the music contractor. Peters has agreed to give her a major credit for bringing in several new songs and rescoring some of the unusable cuts.

And in the studio, veteran engineer Al Schmitt has been brought in by Columbia to remix the album. "Schmitt did three cuts," Barbra says. "I didn't like them." Schmitt goes off the project. But the Columbia executives are happy with the album now; they think "it's not only one of the best, but one of the biggest albums Barbra's ever made." They plan to have Barbra close the August sales convention singing tunes from *Butterfly*.

The album is, finally, manufactured. On the credits, Kathy Kasper's name is nowhere to be found. "It must have been an oversight," Jon Peters will say. Her name will definitely appear on all subsequent pressings.

Summer, 1974

Mark Rydell is on the phone with his agent. The 90 days of his "free development deal" are over. Warner Brothers will not "go forward" with him on *Rainbow Road*. Rydell says, "The Dunnes and John Foreman thought I was dragging my heels on the casting. There were a number of people they thought would be good, and if I had said yes, they would have gone

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN PHILLIPS

Barbra Streisand and Jon Peters: Hair today and gone tomorrow?

ahead with some of their in-house record stars." But he wouldn't, and they didn't, and now Rydell's lawyer is having a tough time collecting the $147 Rydell laid out for research materials and commissary lunches. Warners isn't making a "courtesy payment" for three months of Rydell's time. In fact, it will take him two months to collect the $147.

But at least the second draft is finished. Warners finds it vastly improved, a gritty hard-core look at the seamier side of rock. There is, however, no tight relationship between the male and female stars. And while Kristofferson has committed himself to the project, he has not formally signed.

Warners now calls director Jerry Schatzberg, whose epigrammatic, often downbeat *Scarecrow* won the Cannes Film Festival for them. A gritty take on the rock world by the Dunnes appeals to him (he'd worked with them before, on *Panic in Needle Park*) and he signs a development deal.

At which point Sue Mengers sends the script to client Barbra Streisand.

"*I* discovered this project," Jon Peters will later say. "*I* was the one who found it for Barbra and convinced her to do it." He has, he believes, rescued Barbra from her identity crisis; she will be happy to show her fans a "newer, softer Barbra" in a rock and roll movie. Already, she is living more like a rock person now that she's left Bel-Air for Jon's funky Malibu ranch. Her hair flows down her back these days. She plants orchids. And plays with the $25,000 sound system—the hidden jûkebox—Peters has thoughtfully stocked with the Streisand Sound.

She is also seeing the same gestalt therapist who treats Jon Peters and Leslie Ann Warren. In fact, they are all very close. Because Peters is trying "to open myself up." He is fascinated "by negative feedback," fascinated by his relationship with Barbra and mostly, of course, fascinated with himself. "I'm a fella who, when I was nine years old, watched my father die in front of me," Peters says. "So I know about death. The character in my movie is a guy who's fighting all the time and hitting all the time. And he can't relate. It's the macho story, which is very much me."

The "macho" who runs the two beauty salons—in Beverly Hills and Encino—started young. His mother is related to the Paganos, well-known L.A. beauty salon owners. When his father died, Jon became a disciplinary problem. He dropped out of school in the eighth grade, was sent to "training school," ran away to Europe and got married at 15. He split from that wife, returned to Los Angeles and started hanging around, watching Gene Shacov—the freewheeling, cut 'em and lay 'em character who was the inspiration for the hairdresser played by Warren Beatty in the upcoming *Shampoo*—work on the heads of the rich and powerful. Peters learned his lessons well. By 21, he had met and married Leslie Ann Warren and chopped her hair off. A year later, *Blow Up* was released; hairdressers were in and Peters opened his own shop. A few years go by. Jon and Leslie Ann split and Jon installed his mother as the receptionist at the Beverly Hills shop.

So isn't this the perfect time for Sue Mengers to give Barbra a script about two singers, "trapped by their money and success, trying to relate to each other and really get into their feelings," as Peters synopsizes it. He'd like to change it a little, though.

"Two people fall in love," Peters explains. "She becomes a super superstar by realizing what the most important thing to both of them is: communicating. Wanting to have children. Not the thousands of agents and press agents and all that stuff that control their life. He's a guy who spent the first 30 years of his life fighting—very aggressive—and then met this woman and fell very much in love and realized that this was his chance to live. But he accidentally dies. For us, the understanding of it—through film—is a very heavy thing. Do you know what I mean? That's why the script has to be perfect. Because it has to be right for us."

But Schatzberg, the Dunnes and John Foreman are not keen on making a $5 million home musical, *Barbra and Jon*, out of their gritty rock story. Not that their opinion means anything—Barbra Streisand, they're made to understand, is interested in starring in *Rainbow Road*. And as her very next project. This is no minor announcement; with the return of the star system, Barbra Streisand is more than just an actress, she is a multinational corpora-

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tion, the only female star whose whims are as powerful as the edicts of the studio chieftains. In her 12-year film career, she has made $12 million—for herself. Her last film, *For Pete's Sake*, was an embarrassment to all concerned, but it brought the money men $9 million. So when Barbra Streisand decides to make a movie, and a musical at that, there are smiles in the corporate offices. Which is why no one at Warners fights with her about making Jon Peters the producer of *Rainbow Road*.

"Anyone who wonders how a first-time producer can do it," rationalizes Peters, "just has to take a look at the way I produced Barbra's album. Or how I run my beauty salons. I employ 300 people. I'm a businessman, man, that's all." As a businessman, all he has to do to attach himself to *Rainbow Road* is move into an office and keep his mouth shut, leaving the big decisions to the Dunnes, Foreman, Schatzberg, Kristofferson and Warners. He does not do this.

"We loved each other at our first meeting," Schatzberg remembers. "I went out to his ranch; he showed me where he was putting old wood everywhere, the outdoor Jacuzzi . . . we had a good meeting. I didn't see any books, but . . . I went back to New York with the idea that we were going ahead with the project."

Schatzberg and his wife return in July. A big basket of fruit from Barbra and Jon is waiting at the Beverly Hills Hotel. But the Dunnes are worried now; if Barbra agrees to star in the movie, the project will leave Warner Brothers and become the property of First Artists.*

Nevertheless, they agree to dovetail the project for Barbra. But although the Dunnes and the Streisand-Peters all live in Malibu, the Dunnes will not meet with Jon—even for a little story conference—until they have completed the new draft. The Dunnes say they work best alone.

Barbra, meanwhile, is squabbling with Kristofferson about billing. She refuses to see his name above the title with hers. Kristofferson's lawyer, therefore, is holding up the negotiations.

Jon Peters is beginning to feel left out. Schatzberg gets a call from Barbra. She wonders what Schatzberg thinks of Jon playing the male lead. Schatzberg thinks she is kidding.

A hasty meeting is called to discuss this at the ranch. Jon and Barbra keep saying that Jon can play the part better, that the world is waiting to see them together. "I don't want to shoot a documentary about you two," Schatzberg says. John Foreman, now leveraged into the relative Siberia of executive producership, is silent. Then he reminds Barbra that if the project does go over to First Artists, Kristofferson is still attached to it. Barbra is angry. "You mean Warners would really rather have him than me?" she demands. "Can Peters sing?" Schatzberg asks. It is the key question. "No," Jon Peters admits, "but you said you could shoot around me. Like you're going to do with Kristofferson." A weary Schatzberg:

Now that she's left Bel-Air for Jon's funky Malibu ranch, Barbra's living like a rock person. Her hair flows down her back. She plants orchids. And plays with the $25,000 sound system Peters has thoughtfully stocked with the Streisand Sound

"Look, you can do that with a singer to make it look like his acting has more energy. You can't do it with an actor to make it look like he's a singer." The meeting is over. Jon Peters, the haircutter turned record producer turned movie producer, will not make his debut as an actor.

Rainbow Road now seems to be under way. There are fights over production managers, over the music people, but the project is, sort of, moving ahead. Jon Peters settles into his new office at Barwood, Barbra's company within First Artists, and orders a stereo just like Schatzberg's. The Dunnes are still hung up about the relationship between the male and female leads, but Schatzberg isn't worried. "Screenplays take a lot of work," he says.

Barbra still hasn't signed though. Nor has Kristofferson. And Warners has not turned the project over to First Artists. What does happen is that Dick Shepherd—the Warner Brothers executive holding the project together—leaves the studio under pressure. Then Ted Ashley, Warner Brothers' president, resigns. The film is now in a curious limbo. And while Barbra finishes *Funny Lady*, Jon Peters cuts hair every Wednesday and Saturday in Beverly Hills.

August, 1974

The Dunnes submit their third-draft screenplay. "The third draft was little more than a rehash of the second draft," John Dunne recalls. "It's tough to tailor a part for a star. We were all played out at that point." But as much as the Dunnes want out, Jon Peters wants them out even more. Warner Brothers agrees. The Dunnes are given $125,000 plus 10 percent of the gross. "We came out smelling like a rose," John Dunne says. "I really hope the movie gets made, we have such a nice chunk of it. And I'm sure relieved to be out of it."

Jon Peters now has an idea. Or rather, he has a friend with an idea: Jonathan Axelrod, stepson of screenwriter George Axelrod and, just coincidentally, a CMA client. Sue Mengers has given him the Dunnes' script. Why not reverse the roles, Axelrod suggests; let Barbra play the Norman Maine character, the star on the way down, and Kristofferson can be Esther Blodgett, the protégé whose career outstrips her sponsor's. Peters thinks this is brilliant. He does not know that over the past 40 years three other directors have had the same thought—William Wellman, George Cukor, Mike Nichols—and they have all rejected it.

"My original idea was to reverse the roles, make her like Janis Joplin," Axelrod says. Schatzberg disagrees. Peters and Schatzberg begin to part company. They see less of each other. Barbra and Jon are seen going into a restaurant at the beach. Jon says, "I've been trying to get into this place for eight years. I'll get in tonight." The maitre d' seats them right away. The restaurant is half empty.

Now the heat is on. Peters insists that the script be turned over to him, that he develop the movie along Axelrod's idea. He tells this to John Calley, new president of Warner Brothers; Warners still owns those rights to *A Star Is Born*. Calley recalls, "I'd never met Peters before. He came in and said that in his and Barbra's view, the screenplay was moving away from being suitable for Barbra. I agreed with them. Forget about whether the screenplay was good or not, the issue was 'is it right for Barbra?' He said, in effect, 'It's very simple, either we get to

* First Artists is a subsidiary of Warner Brothers, a company controlled by the "artists"—Dustin Hoffman, Paul Newman, Sidney Poitier, Steve McQueen and Barbra Streisand. In return for making three pictures without the million-dollar "front money" that any other studio would have to pay them, the stars can make whatever movies they want, so long as the budget is under $3 million for a dramatic film, $5 million for a musical. Warners gets the distribution rights, reimbursing First Artists for two-thirds of the film's negative cost upon delivery of a finished film. And the artists get 25 percent of the gross—a quarter for every dollar the theater owners return to Warners—right off the top. They aren't, therefore, encouraged to make small, personal, non-commercial films. Even so, no First Artists star has made a vanity production for the company. This may not be the case when *Rainbow Road* starts shooting in the spring.

take over the screenplay and make it work for Barbra or we take a walk. It's entirely up to you. Do whatever you like.' We had no real alternatives. We were most anxious to do the film with Barbra." But even if it means losing all artistic control, distributing the movie for First Artists? "I felt," says Calley, "that the worst thing that could happen was that if they took a shot at the screenplay and failed, we'd lose them anyway, but if they succeeded. . . . " *If* they succeeded, Warners would get a Barbra Streisand musical for Christmas, following her projected triumph in *Funny Lady*, in a year when Warners isn't long on product.

"I told Jerry [Schatzberg] to stay loose and see what the two of them were able to do with the screenplay," Calley says. "He thought about it overnight and called me the next day and said, 'Listen, I don't want anyone else developing my screenplays.' " Jerry Schatzberg is walking off the movie. He is the fifth casualty.

Fall, 1974

Jonathan Axelrod is working on the fourth draft. He has turned in 55 pages of the new screenplay. He has not reversed the roles. But Barbra loves it. More: Jon loves it. Barbra has agreed to sign on the basis of the first third of the script. Peters starts interviewing new directors: Arthur Hiller, Hal Ashby. Warner Brothers has not completely turned the project over to First Artists although First Artists funds are paying Axelrod for writing the script that Barbra will agree to star in. To be very literal, Barbra has commissioned a screenplay for her company when the underlying rights to it are still owned by another company.

"The conflict came," Peters says, "when I decided *I* wanted to direct it. It's a story I felt only I could tell. I wanted to deal with it and not interpret it through another person. Barbra felt this was a wise choice, too." Did Warner Brothers agree? "I don't want to get into any negatives," Peters insists. "There were negotiations that went on for three months. It bounced back and forth because they wanted to control it, but then Barbra and First Artists had their way because Freddie Fields [president of CMA] wanted it at First Artists as well."

The bottom line, of course, is Barbra. Barbra wants the movie at First Artists with her boyfriend producing, directing and co-writing it—Barbra gets it. Freddie Fields and Sue Mengers are her agents and they are very powerful and persuasive but also, now that Jon is throwing his weight around, who knows? He is capable of getting angry with Barbra's agents and is apt to say to her, "Get rid of these dummies. You have me. What do you need anybody else for?" Already Joyce Haber has been running items in her column in the Los Angeles *Times* about Mengers' worries with this Jon Peters situation. Naturally, Sue Mengers puts pressure on John Calley; she wants to keep Barbra happy.

Calley makes the decision to turn it all over to Barbra.

Winter, 1974

Barbra finally finishes *Funny Lady*. She and Jon can now work full time on *Rainbow Road*. Their first move: firing Jonathan Axelrod. He has, apparently, failed. Peters feels he needs "meatier dialogue." He says, "Axelrod was the right person at the beginning because he was my interpreter. What you read in that script, I wrote. Now I need a real writer." Why don't he and Barbra take a crack at a re-write? "We're talkers," says Peters, "not writers."

Sue Mengers, therefore, is not concentrating on her bratwurst and beans as she lunches at the Polo Lounge. At the next banquette, Everett Ziegler, the literary agent, is having lunch with Bob Solo, the new Warner Brothers head of production. "Hey, Ziggy, you literary lion," Mengers yells over, "we need a writer for *A Star Is Born*." "How about asking John Dunne to suggest one?" Ziggy replies. "Come on, I'm serious—there's *money* involved," Mengers insists. But Ziegler is not enthusiastic about finding a writer for that project. He seems to think the whole thing is a joke.

Peters is yelling. "Directing is a thing I've done my whole life! It's getting people to do what I want them to do!"

So Jon Peters starts interviewing screenwriters. He speaks with a soft-spoken television writer. But the writer cuts the meeting short, leaves the meeting mumbling that Peters is an idiot, that he won't be caught dead writing for him even if it means passing up a Barbra Streisand credit.

There is also a problem with the music. Richard Perry—the first choice of Rydell, Schatzberg and Barbra—has been meeting with each new director of *Rainbow Road* since winter, 1973. "In my last phone conversation with Jon Peters," Perry recalls, "he said, wouldn't it be great if the two of us could co-direct, be a real team, you know?" But Perry never hears from Jon Peters again.

Jack Nietsche, who scored *Performance*, is now called in. He had worked for a few days on the *Butterfly* album but freaked out; Peters thinks he'll do fine on *Rainbow Road*. He is, however, replaced a few weeks later by Rupert Holmes, an accomplished New York composer-arranger who once had a Number One hit with a song about cannibalism in mine shafts. Peters plunges into the work with him in December.

Now all Jon Peters needs is a director of photography and a good editor. And to lose the 15 pounds he's gained over the last six months. He sits in the Warner Brothers commissary, brooding about his movie. He does not order even half a grapefruit. "This is a young movie, young idea, young talents," he blurts out. "People in this town have it in for me because I'm young, you know what I mean? And I'm a bit uptight about directing this film, this is a big project, you know?" Yes, but with that good editor, good script and good cameraman, someone suggests, he'll be the equal of half the working directors in Hollywood. "Exactly, that's just what I think," Peters agrees. "That's why my editor is Dede Allen."

This creates a major silence at the table. Because Dede Allen, who edited *Serpico* and *Bonnie and Clyde*, is about as good as it gets. Maybe Peters knows what he is doing after all. But when Peters returns to his office and the phone rings—a call from Dede Allen—Jon Peters' press agent takes the visitors outside. "Jon wants to take the call in private," he explains. "He's never spoken with Dede Allen before."

Dede Allen turns Peters down. She suggests her young, former assistant. Jon Peters says, "Great! This is a young movie, we need young ideas, we need young talent."

Meanwhile, Kristofferson has yet to sign; his manager isn't even aware that Jon and Barbra have fired Axelrod. "Kris will not sign anything," his manager says, "until he sees the new script." By now, naturally, Peters is getting what he'd call "hassled." His sentences are delivered rapid-fire, with the grammar increasingly slurred. He no longer prefaces his sentences with "Barbra and I feel. . . ." Now he begins, "I said" or "I told Barbra. . . ." He is pulling no-shows with writers, music people and his production crew.

In fact, Jon Peters is now yelling. "Directing is a thing I've done my whole life! It's getting people to do what I want

PHOTOGRAPH BY SYLVIA NORRIS/PHOTO TRENDS

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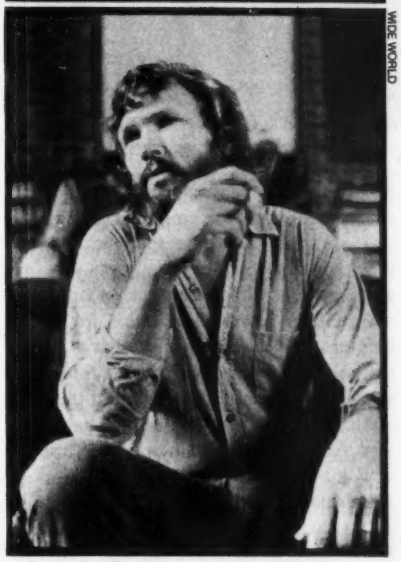

WIDE WORLD

Casualty Rydell (top), agent Mengers (center) and elusive co-star Kristofferson.

them to do!" He kicks rocks as he strides around the 100-acre Malibu ranch. "If you had seen this place when I started, the fact that it was all dirt."

And in truth, the house is a cathedral-ceilinged, *House Beautiful* vision of ranch living: a powder room with marble counters, a fur lounging bed covered with antique pillows that doubles as the living room couch, and a bathtub built from natural stones cemented together. Barbra's things are everywhere. Boas. Hats. Pictures. Clothes. Health foods. Outside there are signs of expansion: land has been roped off for gardens and there is a hole where a natural rock swimming pool—a large outdoor version of the bathtub—waits to be finished. Through all this, the street-fighter who used to work out at the Main Avenue gym in downtown Los Angeles struts around like Nixon eyeing improvements at San Clemente. It does not matter to him that Joyce Haber snipes in his direction every time he says or does anything. He does not care that the men who lunch at La Scala and the Bistro, the men who run the studios, say things like, "Thank God those two aren't on our backs." He is not sensitive to the letters from angry First Artists stockholders who demand to know what is going on. He is not deterred by the news that his name brings snorts of laughter just about anywhere it's brought up in Bel-Air. The album he and Barbra have produced has just become a gold record. What Jon Peters appreciates very well is that he is living with a large entertainment corporation and that the merger looks permanent—particularly because his multinational corporation is thinking of marrying him.

That kind of power is rarely benign. It is not enough for Jon Peters to mastermind the career of his private conglomerate. He is not satisfied with a minor role as Barbra's shield, giving her the privacy she says she now wants. Yes, he sees himself as the take-charge guy in her business life—he says, "I have in my pluses (sic) a woman who, if she would get up on the screen and smile, the movie would do $20 million"—but even more, he sees himself as the lead in their larger-than-life movie, the one that so closely resembles *A Star Is Born.*

Jon Peters, therefore, believes he is on the way up, all the way up. The only question now is the quality of the ascent. Which is why *Rainbow Road* must be made his way—because only he knows the special message he has for his best supporting actress. "What I'm really saying in this film is to Barbra," Peters explains. "Which is: you better check your act and see if it's the money or the success which is the most important thing. Are your goals the things that you really want to achieve? You gotta evaluate all the time. Because the danger in dreams is that you just might get them."

"What can I say? He makes Barbra happy. She's never looked better in her life," comments Barbra's agent, Sue Mengers. That few industry pros believe Barbra's company will survive another two years—Paul Newman has not renewed his commitment, the president of First Artists is out looking for a job—is of no particular concern. Barbra is a survivor, she couldn't care less that the SEC's comment on the First Artists setup was, "Giving performing artists creative control over their films represents a significant departure from traditional industry practice." After all, you don't get further away from "traditional industry practice" than Jon Peters.

But once you commit to someone like Peters, your most immediate problem is endlessly pleasing him. Because Jon Peters can be a very moody person. "Emotional," he'd say. Like at the Christmas party of Jon Peters, Inc., when he stands before a roomful of his employees and chokes up. "This is a very sad day for me," Peters says. "I won't be coming into the shop anymore to cut hair. I have to spend all my time for the next year with this film, you know?" It's very heavy for him. And, by extension, for her. Only Barbra isn't at the shop that day; she's not too interested in egg-nogging it up with Jon's stylists. And since Jon's lady didn't appear, well, the employees of Jon Peters, Inc., were told to come stag to watch their boss bid farewell.

But there is a bright side. New writers have been found—the Bob Dillons, who specialize in shoot-'em-ups (*French Connection II*)—so Jon is sure that they will be able to pull off his home rockumentary. "We had the most beautiful weekend with them," he gushes. "We're going up to Big Sur with them. We're going to throw away everything we've done up to now and start over again. We're going to make this a love story. They're the most beautiful people and the love they have for each other is the same feeling as Barbra and I have for each other. These last five months with Jonathan [Axelrod] have taught me what I don't want to do with this film. Now we're going to make it much closer to the 1936 version, the one with Janet Gaynor. That was magic. That's what we want to achieve."

And with that multinational corporation sharing his bed, Jon is just dying to show all of us fans waiting breathlessly that whatever a hairdresser believes, he can achieve. Right, Barbra? ●

MOVIES

An unfinished woman

By Frank Rich

If women were, as a matter of routine, represented as characters in American films right now, Ellen Burstyn would be tearing up this country's movie screens on a regular basis. More than anyone else, this actress was born to play that woman who is most conspicuously a product of our historical moment—namely, the bright, middle-class woman who has been, to date, the principal beneficiary of our ever mushrooming women's movement. Unfortunately, female characters of any variety don't exist in American pictures anymore—except to serve as decorative sexual fodder for Hollywood's inexhaustible supply of leading men—and the opportunities that Burstyn has to show us what she can do are pathetically few and widely spaced. Yet, even in the briefest of appearances, such as her cameo in Paul Mazursky's *Harry and Tonto* last year, she grabs us as maybe only two other American screen actresses of her generation—Jane Fonda and Gena Rowlands—can; walking along the wintry Chicago lakefront with her wandering Lear of a father (Art Carney) about midway through that film, she turned her cantankerous, even abrasive, thrusts of filial revolt into galvanizing gestures of love—gestures that were instantly recognizable as the products of a fiercely won inner reconciliation. She's the ultimate in modern, unsentimentalized heroines: flinty and angular and self-deprecating from a position of strength. What we see in Burstyn is a late-blooming striver, a trooper who can survive bad marriages, a person who wants and may even get control over her own life.

In **Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore,** Martin Scorsese's first film since *Mean Streets,* Burstyn has a fuller, slightly less worldly-wise version of the character she played for Mazursky, and she's great, even though the movie's success is somewhat less consistent. Her screen presence seems a hybrid of various parts of the independently spirited female stars of other eras, but the total picture is something original and very much of our own time. She has Hepburn's force of will without Hepburn's Yankee aristocratic bearing; she has the young Shirley MacLaine's wide-eyed, gamin-like vulnerability but she leavens MacLaine's up-front susceptibility to victimization with a bracing undercurrent of almost stolid common sense; she has a touch of Streisand's zaniness (when we first see her in *Alice,* she makes cross-eyes at the camera), but she never quite goes haywire. Burstyn is not beautiful by the standards of the glamour industry in which she works, but, like her predecessors, she defines a new kind of beauty as she goes along. She's not meant to play opposite a Redford or a Newman (maybe no woman is). Her cornstalk hair, pale skin and plain features are not soft but sharp; they speak of a heartland America that has come of age, and, in that way, the self she presents reflects the recent metamorphoses of a multitude of her contemporaries. She's well removed from that fragile female creature, doomed to the junk heap at middle age, that Hollywood and its audiences used to accept as the holy feminine ideal. At every turn Ellen Burstyn reassures us that her American life is one that will have a second act—and maybe even a happy one at that.

Until it veers toward its own, jarringly wrong-headed, happy ending, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* is abundantly worthy of its leading lady. Through Alice Hyatt, a newly widowed 35-year-old mother who sets out to retrieve a singing career abandoned years earlier for marriage, Scorsese and his screenwriter, Robert Getchell, have found a marvelous vehicle for dealing with a spectrum of issues whose immediacy is alien to most of our current movies. This is the first American film in ages to confront seriously the experience of being a single woman in our society, and, among other things, *Alice* embraces such specific concerns as the tensions of single motherhood, the special qualities of friendships among women, and, to a less successful degree, the emotional and social conflicts that come to light, even now, when a woman attempts to integrate a career with a relationship with a man. Given Scorsese's affection for his medium, it's to be expected that *Alice* additionally attempts to assign a role to movies as a cultural force in all of these matters—a force that shapes the characters' perceptions of who they are and how they are to work out their lives. Alice's desire to be an entertainer, we're pointedly told, came from the movies of her youth—but we also learn that, along with those showbiz ambitions, the movies brought the character some over-

Ellen Burstyn in Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*: a new kind of beauty.

romanticized notions about how those ambitions might be attained.

To establish this metaphorical context for everything that follows, Scorsese opens his picture with a spectacular flourish of movie-buff showmanship: on a screen temporarily reduced to the dimensions of pre-Cinemascope film, the director brings us the pre-pubescent Alice lingering outside her farmland home, a home that is unmistakably a studio set, awash in a monochromatically vermillion, old-fashioned technicolor dusk. Looking for all the world like Dorothy in the film version of *The Wizard of Oz*, the young Alice alternately sings along with an Alice Faye recording of "You'll Never Know" and vows to someday top that star as a vocalist—until Scorsese explodes the image and sends us crashing into Alice's wide-screen, multicolored present, where she lives in New Mexico as the housewife of a surly, volatile truck driver (Billy Green Bush). The husband is killed in a highway crash a few scenes later, and *Alice*'s story becomes that of its title character's picaresque journey back to her beginnings, which she now imbues with that same idyllic, nostalgic haze that lights up Scorsese's opening "flashback" sequence: Alice is convinced that the only way she can realize the dreams of her youth is to return to Monterey, California, that hometown where she had first seen the movies that fueled those dreams. With only about a buck and a half to her name and an 11-year-old son to support, however, she must take the trip slowly, stopping along the way to earn money in the various towns that lie between New Mexico and her promised land. As it happens, the film measures her progress not so much by the geography she traverses in her packed-up station wagon as by her gradual realization that some of her basic assumptions may be off base; Alice is about to learn that her ability to grab what she wants may have more to do with her internal resources than with either returning to Monterey or avoiding the advances of men whom she fears might "sidetrack" her as her husband once had.

On the road Alice suffers most of the expected humiliations: a brief affair with a younger man (*Mean Streets*' Mafia prince, Harvey Keitel) who proves to be both married and psychotically violent toward women; leers from piano-bar owners who might give her work ("Look at my face," she tells one of them, "I don't sing with my ass"); and, inevitably, a necessity-dictated spell of degrading employment as a waitress at a diner in Tucson. What keeps her going is the promise of fulfillment in California and her relationship with son Tommy (Alfred Lutter, that rare child actor with talent), a wise-ass kid who's every bit as sturdy, flip and stubborn as his mother. Alice likes to pepper her language with the lingo of '40s movies and her byplay with Tommy, whose precocious questions about sex and money intermingle with a more conventional rambunctiousness, recalls, with fond humor, all those pairings of single parents and offspring that used to turn up in Hollywood comedies (*Miracle on 34th Street, A Hole in the Head, The Courtship of Eddie's Father, et al.*). But this is not a cloying mother-son team, either; there are instances of pain and passion that should be recognizable to anyone raised by a lone parent and most everyone who was not. When, in a plastic Phoenix motel room, Tommy starts to bitch about the inconveniences of his shoestring, fatherless existence, Alice, in a fit of temper, sits the boy down with a pad and commands him to write down "everything that can go bad . . . everything that's wrong with your life. . . ."Meanwhile, Scorsese's buoyantly expressive camera jerks in spasms that parallel his characters' emotional duress.

Though they have less time to do so, Getchell and Scorsese also make the most of Alice's casual, in-transit attachments. Mel and Ruby's Diner, the scene of the heroine's desperate fallback employment, is, like all of this movie's settings, drenched in a harsh white Southwestern sunlight that manages to make it look like a canvas drafted by one of our current neo-realist painters; to populate the joint, the film's creators throw in two batty waitresses lifted right out of stereotypical Hollywood lore, a weepy scatterbrain (Valerie Curtin) and a loud, raunchy-mouthed slattern (Diane Ladd, who's sensational)—and then proceed to turn the caricatures inside out again. For while these waitresses, Vera and Flo, are traditionally the kind of women that movies set up as the butts of sexist jokes, here they are systematically humanized via some appealing personality quirks that they gradually reveal to both us and Alice. One day Flo—a woman who, to Alice's distaste, actually rejoices in the fact that she's been "dumped on by kings in her time"—carries her self-destructive, low-rent-floozie routine so far that Alice can't help but crack up. So does Flo herself, and the two laughing women fall into each other's arms, no longer antagonists but now new-found friends who can be co-conspirators against the absurdities life never ceases to hand them. Getchell's script is so witty and aware and Scorsese shows so much talent for capturing off-hand human behavior (just as he did in the Little Italy setting of his last work) that, between them, these filmmakers have no trouble in piling up a bountiful collection of comic personages and vignettes, even when they're working from the most unlikely materials. For a Tucson playmate Tommy gets an impossibly heady little girlfriend (Jodie Foster) who boasts of a divorced mother who "turns tricks at the Ramada Inn"; Alice's married friend (Lelia Goldoni) is a woman given to giddy speculations as to the size of Robert Redford's penis and fleeting temptations to chuck her husband and kids and flee with Alice to freedom. Scorsese's cinematic stylistics may be determinedly subjective, but underneath the visual extravagance beats, for most of the time, the very heart of truth.

Where the movie betrays itself is in its handling of the two principal men in Alice's life. We get a brief tip-off to the major trouble that lies ahead in the early scenes featuring the heroine's husband, a tyrant so loutish that, despite Alice's later disclaimer that she had once prized "strong and domineering" male "masters," we never believe for a second that she would have stayed married to him for so long or that he could possibly be the father of her sensitive, utterly nonmacho child. Luckily he disappears so quickly that we soon forget about him, but David (Kris Kristofferson), the happy-go-lucky rancher who falls madly in love with Alice from the moment she first waits on him at Mel and Ruby's, is less easily disposed of. As Getchell has written the character, he's just as extreme, in an opposite direction, as Alice's late husband—accommodating, kind, respectful of Alice's personal drives, not pushy about sex and apparently blessed with an inheritance that allows him to take endless time off from his gentleman farming to sit at the diner and flirt. Even though the screenwriter has contrived a crisis for the couple—David slaps Tommy when the kid throws a tantrum that all but invites such a response—there's no question that our hero and heroine will end up together. Kristofferson brings his characteristic good-natured folksiness to the part, but the part is nothing more than a *deus-ex-machina*, a fairyland Prince Charming who bears a 1975 raised consciousness rather than a silver slipper. The revisionist happy ending that arrives—one that is liberating for Alice and David both—may be the per-

fect, ironic punch line to the film's scheme of reworked Hollywood imagery, but it's false to the more important thematic expectations that have been raised. Scorsese and Getchell seem to be (understandably) in love with Burstyn's Alice—the director's camera touchingly circles her every time she sits down at a piano to sing one of her throaty '40s numbers—and they may be guilty of loving her too much; in the end, the filmmakers just can't resist that romantic male impulse to play God over her life. By awarding Alice the right man at the right time they rob her of the opportunity to work out her own destiny, and that's a paradoxical and deflating conclusion to a film that has brought forth that rare movie heroine who can do nicely, very nicely, by herself.

The verbal and visual images of Alain Resnais' new film, **Stavisky,** are those of smashed crystal, of mirrored hallways, of refracted light, of fragmented time and of music so mournful that the chortlings of woodwinds can assume what one of the movie's lines refers to as "the fluidity and sluggishness of death." It's a movie made up of glittering splinters—splinters that are the remains of a brittle toy world that has been sent crashing to the floor. The specific subject of *Stavisky* is its title character, a daring crook whose convoluted flimflam of French financial institutions in the early 1930s led, once they were exposed, to the collapse of that country's left-coalition government and then indirectly, through one of those fabulous, accelerating chain reactions that are endemic to history, to the fall of France herself. But rather than give coherent order to the true-life saga of Stavisky, Resnais has chosen to yank it apart, conducting a cubist's examination of what reality looks like when that reality is bursting at the seams. In an appearance before an investigating parliamentary committee near the film's end, a former Stavisky associate testifies that he knows "only one small piece of this Chinese puzzle," and then goes on to elaborate that "life isn't like the stage—you can't see everything." Resnais understands that movies are not like the stage either, and so he concentrates on the pieces of the Stavisky puzzle, discovering in those pieces more meaning than the assembled whole could possibly offer. *Stavisky* is a film that exercises a dazzling array of the medium's options, and it usually exercises those options extraordinarily well.

To some extent the movie is a character study of its curious central figure, played by Jean-Paul Belmondo, an immigrant Russian-Jewish dentist's son who had been arrested for a minor fraud in 1926 and who now, under the pseudonym of Serge Alexandre, returns to construct a bribe-greased commercial empire. Stavisky suffers from a variety of psychological disorders, ranging from guilt over his father (who had killed himself in shame over his son's first arrest) to a parvenu's paranoia about his ability to fit into the moneyed circles in which he travels to megalomania (even as he carries out his corrupt schemes, he sees himself as the man who can save the world from its galloping depression). And yet, for the most part, the man befits the screen personality of the star who plays him: he's a dandy, a shrewd and charismatic manipulator of people and power, a gentleman who leaves his dirty work to an entourage of henchmen. Stavisky's schizophrenia is fascinating, but less so as an insight into the man than as a metaphor that embodies Resnais' conception of his entire work. This director, who is one of the true masters of film editing, has cut his film so that it's always moving back and forth through time; the schisms of the movie's surface, its very style, becomes its message. The way in which Resnais tells his story makes it impossible for us ever to be safely oriented as to plot, motivation and chronology, and the jarring rhythms of this jumbled presentation of his material becomes an aesthetic equivalent not only to the workings of Stavisky's mind but to the jagged Art Deco decor of the '30s Paris and Biarritz where the film is set. The sensation the audience receives is akin to vertigo, as if all that is solid were slipping away—as if we, too, were having Stavisky's wife's recurring nightmare of "traveling in a car without brakes."

Belmondo and Boyer in *Stavisky*: mirrors.

As Resnais reorders it, Stavisky's own story could be sufficient to put across the film's aching visions, but he and his screenwriter, Jorge Semprum (the scenarist of *Z* and Resnais' own *La Guerre Est Finie*), somehow felt it necessary to add an additional, distracting element—a simultaneous account of the stay in France of another Russian exile, Leon Trotsky, and his subsequent involuntary departure when the chaos created by the exposure of Stavisky's malfeasance gives the French government an excuse to usher him out. By occasionally cutting away from his main story, with its own flashbacks and flashforwards (in which Stavisky is eerily spoken of in the past tense), to keep us up to date on Trotsky's progress, Resnais does manage to create a moral and political dialectic—one that is most pointedly effected by the contrast between the sunbleached, organic landscape of Trotsky's southern villa and the diamond-hard, silver-plated opulence of the many white hotel rooms where Stavisky holds forth. But though these historical figures are bracketed together by happenstance and though the filmmakers create a subsidiary character who has dealings with them both, the connections are neither compelling nor assimilated into the design of the film. It's a breech of form in a movie too splendid to be allowed such an obvious, dangling thread.

Since all of Resnais' other calculations pay off handsomely, *Stavisky* picks up a head of steam that even the intrusions of the subplot cannot slow down. "To understand Alex," says Stavisky's psychiatrist, "you must dream about him, and imagine his dreams"—and this is precisely what Resnais has done, orchestrating the melancholy phenomena pertaining to his hero and his elegant environment into a kaleidoscopic universe of such facile beauty we know it can only perish. As the film moves from fall into winter, Resnais steps up the whirl of his montage until the concrete and subconscious artifacts of his story—the red carnations that Stavisky always wears in his three-piece suits, the newspapers' breathless headlines, the silver ornamentation of Rolls Royces, graveyards and tombs, a storefront bearing the legend "Biarritz Bonheur," the burning of incriminating files, and, finally, a splattering of blood—break into an orgasmic death rattle; the rumble we feel is, in its tenor and some of its specifics, not unlike the one that has washed over our own country in the past two years. To accompany the visual line of this cataclysm, Resnais has leaned heavily on Stephen Sondheim's musical score, this great American theater composer's first for a movie, and the sorrow the music conveys is so integral to *Stavisky*'s impact that one can't imagine the film existing without it. With the aid of his longtime orchestrator, Jonathan

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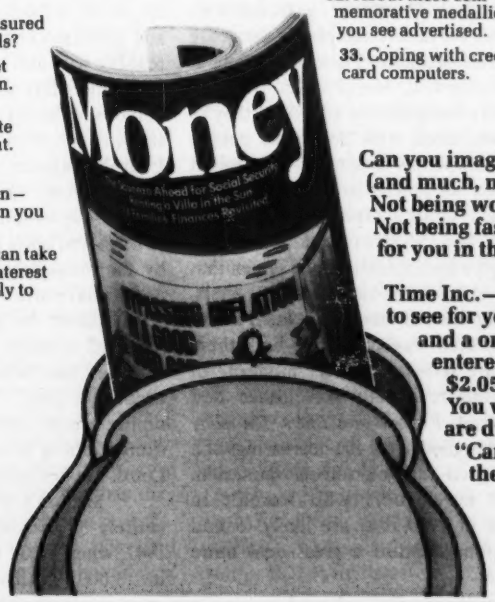

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Tunick, Sondheim has provided a sound track of surging, discordant romanticism, full of the kind of haunting, chilling regret that one associates with the opening music of his last two Broadway works, *Follies* and *A Little Night Music.*

As for Jean-Paul Belmondo, he has in Stavisky one of his best parts in years. His natural magnetism is perfectly suited to this man of consummate charm, apolitical pragmatism and luxurious material lusts. His almost serene love for his stunning wife (Anny Duperey, a translucent specter of doom, aptly described at one point as heralding "winter's immaculate snows") has an intensity that, in the ambiguity of its origins, brings the film a whole other level of mystery. To fill out the drama Semprum and Resnais have also created an aged member of the old order to become Stavisky's friend and associate—Baron Raoul, a man who has joyously devoted 40 years to squandering the fortune his ancestors had earned in the service of Napoleonic imperialism. Charles Boyer is the only person who could conceivably play the part, and he does, brilliantly. Like the aristocrats of Jean Renoir's own classic about the decay of pre-war France, *The Rules of the Game,* Boyer's Baron has a serene charm that one hates to see die along with the less appealing, decadent delusions he represents—even as one knows it must. The baron also serves as the film's most eloquent spokesman, an unofficial narrator of sorts, and in one of *Stavisky*'s best scenes he tells an anecdote that could speak concisely for the film as a whole. The story is about an American woman he had known in Monte Carlo, "a woman with an enameled face [who] had always carried a mirror, even on the street." Now the woman is dead, a suicide, for, as the baron explains, she woke up one day and "couldn't stand to see her face falling out of that mask." In *Stavisky* the face of a civilization falls out of its mask, and, as that woman was destroyed by the reflected image of her own deterioration, so we are devastated by what we see in the shiny mirror Resnais holds up before us all.

Given the stature of the first cinematic by-products of France's current fascination with its World War II past—Marcel Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity* and Malle's *Lacombe, Lucien*—perhaps any subsequent films to deal with the human tribulations of that era were destined to pale in contrast. But comparisons are not entirely necessary to understand what's wrong with Michel Drach's **Les Violons du Bal** and Michel Mitrani's **Black Thursday** (*Les Guichets du Louvre*), the latest examples of the genre to be released here. These struggling, at best competent, works suffer from an instantly recognizable affliction: they're less concerned with people as people than with people as symbols who might be used as pawns in clear-cut moral dramas. Unlike Ophuls and Malle, Drach and Mitrani look at history through a sentimental smoke screen that tends to smooth out their characters, robbing them of their vitality and therefore of their tragedy. While both these films are self-consciously "modern" in style, they're equally soft-headed and provincial: *Violons* and *Black Thursday* seem designed to tug the heartstrings of a nation hell-bent on self-recrimination. Those moviegoers who weren't in France in 1939-1945 are likely to find these films' appeal a great deal more remote.

The more ambitious, annoying and probably the better of the two movies is *Violons,* which gives an account of a wealthy, Finzi-Contini-like Jewish family's flight from France into the safety of neutral Switzerland. Drach has dolled up the movie by mixing this principal narrative line with a black and white film-within-a-film set in the present (the past is in color) that tells of the *tsouris* Drach must endure to convince the movie men to finance his autobiographical screen project (with its noncommercial, happy ending). Needless to say, the existence of this film and others like it takes the sting out of Drach's particular gripes with the French film industry, and besides, American filmmakers have come up with much funnier spoofing of sex-and-violence fixated moguls (e.g., Paul Mazursky in *Alex in Wonderland*) than that which we see here. There are also some pointed contrasts between *cinema verité* shots of present-day student demonstrators in revolt and roseate glimpses of 1939 Jews going into exile; the parallels drawn are arch, doing a disservice to both then and now. Drach should have had the guts to go with his 1939 story and let the message be implicit in his treatment of his characters and dramatic situations; a truly talented director can view the past from the vantage point of the present without resorting to didactic, literal means.

Everything that's worthwhile in *Violons* can be found in its main narrative, and Drach's attempt to recapture the brave innocence of his family is most affectingly realized in the performances of Marie-Josée Nat and Gabrielle Doulcet, in the respective roles of his mother and grandmother. Nat, who is Drach's real-life wife and indeed plays her in the black and white sequences, has a lovely, nervous smile and the warmest eyes to be seen in a movie in recent memory. Jean-Louis Trintignant, dearly missed in movies this year, turns up in the film's present-day action, playing the director (who at first plays himself, until ordered by the money men to find a star). He doesn't have much to do, though he does get to deliver the film's tag line. Having screened a rough cut of his opus for investors and been told that "it could become a film," Trintignant-as-Drach replies, with somewhat overbearing irony, "But it *is* a film." Almost Jean-Louis, but not quite.

Mitrani's *Black Thursday* is set entirely on the day of its title, July 16, 1942, when 9,000 French cops rounded up 13,000 Parisian Jews to bus them to

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concentration camps; only 30 victims of the "Great Roundup" survived extermination. The film's protagonist, Paul (Christian Rist, who plays two roles in *Violons* as well, and seems, in both pictures, a well-intentioned, pallid presence), is a gentile Sorbonne student who takes it on himself to lead Jews to safety before they fall into the ubiquitous official ambushes. The film is about no more than what it appears to be about: the complicity, through silence, of the French with the Nazi occupiers, and the inability of the Jews, who resist Paul's offers of aid, to believe that the worst can happen to them in their own homeland. Mitrani's City of Light becomes a dark street theater in which crowds of spectators stand idly by as yellow-starred neighbors are led away; his screenplay (co-written with Albert Cossery and based on a memoir by Roger Boussinot) is as earnest as its shy hero—and much too repetitive. Rather than show us recurring instances of the Jews' refusal to be saved and of French police who insist they are only following benign orders, Mitrani might have told us more about Paul and the one Jewish girl (Christine Pascal, a weary, sensitive figure with a milky face and pale blue eyes) who tentatively accepts his help—only to surrender to her fate anyway. Paul and the girl fall in love, of course, but the filmmaker settles for using their doomed romance as a bittersweet tableau rather than as a *tableau vivant*. *Black Thursday* documents a crucial moment from the past by reducing it to the flat, if graphic, proportions of an illustration in a history book.

BOOKS

Little verities

By Geoffrey Wolff

Before My Time *by Maureen Howard.* Little, Brown (241 pp., $6.95).

Maureen Howard's two previous novels are unknown to me, but I'll make it my business now to read *Bridgeport Bus* and *Not a Word about Nightingales.* Because *Before My Time* is so grown-up and knowing, so casually controlled, that it is clearly the work of a writer who has already been once or twice around the block. It is about two Irish families loosely related, a family of losers living in Yonkers, and a family of winners living in Cambridge. The teenaged son of the former leaves New York to spend a summer in Massachusetts with the latter. He provokes Laura Quinn into telling her story, and he tells his, and that's pretty much the sum of this novel.

Except that it is a complex sum. Not in its form, which is as unobtrusive as a routine act of nature, but in its humanity. About a dozen characters are drawn, and their motives, manners and controlling circumstances are mixed with such subtlety, and detailed with such easy abundance, that no person ends as he began. All are better than they seemed, because they are figures of fiction, wherein tact, fastidiousness and fancy count as moral acts. These dozen are redeemed by Maureen Howard's honest manipulation of her wonderful talents, and no story can have a happier ending than in such magical and orderly redemption.

Laura Quinn's father was a judge. Her husband is a successful Democratic lawyer who aspires to become a judge. But Harry Quinn is a poor-boy-made-good, while her father was a rich Brahmin whose single act of imagination was to marry beneath himself, and turn Democrat. Laura is a journalist full of good causes, writing from a sense of "false abundance," and the arrival of her cousin's son, Jim Cogan, finds her perched on the ledge of one of those mid-life crises from which the fiction of these years tumbles with such numbing regularity. She is 40 and sick of everything, like almost everyone, and she enters her story as though whining, so that a reader may be forgiven for aiming his contempt at her. But he will never find time to fire before submitting to Laura's variety, and her tough good sense.

"I've come on too strong," she manages to write about herself. "Not to be sentimental, that's all I intend." To exorcise sentimentality she is obliged to forgo ambiguity, false irony and all the masks from the wardrobe of modernist technique. She becomes deeply involved with Jim Cogan, and such is the age's perverse condition that the reader assumes that their involvement is sexual.

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but it is not. Laura and Jim are too busy making sense of what they are and where they have been to stop for play. "We *are* a trading of stories," in Laura's perception, "like travelers on the road or the figures in the Book of Hours, rich with our details and our particular. . . . Mannered. Awful. To say it simply, I am afraid of growing old." Simplicity of such quality is hard won.

Jim Cogan is under indictment for having been a half willing and half witting participant in a scheme to blow up the main branch of the New York Public Library. He was drawn into a band of be-robed crazies, who burn incense, talk nonsense and smoke grass together, because he enjoyed making the beast with two backs in partnership with a silly girl he never much liked. It makes sense; such things happen, but not often enough in novels. Laura's tough on the young—"No synthesis: only themselves, tiresome and unredeeming. No one has ever grown a bean or baked a loaf or sung a song before they came along"—but tougher on her own youth. What is called in the ear-banging locution a "generation gap" is for her merely one of the hundreds of little verities her labor takes in, and then releases as art.

Her tone controls the book, but more of its pages are given over to the story of Jim's family than to her own. She's a better listener than he is: she's spent more time on the earth so that in one of life's more satisfying paradoxes, she has more time to spend. Jim takes her through his mother Millicent, a boozy, sweet creature, evidently the prisoner of a monster of a man, her husband

Maureen Howard:
no faking and no horsing around.

Jack, a gambler and dreamer, irresponsible, a liar, in love with defeat. And, it comes to pass, in love with her, and she with him. But without the least trace of the sentimentality this book's heroine, and by extension its central narrator, promised to abjure.

The Cogans have two children besides Jim, younger twins, a boy and girl, a pair of the oddest monkeys to come along in an honest book for many a season. In childhood they act and think only as one, as though they were Siamese twins, or as though they were holding out together against the world's assault on their shared secrets. Then the girl grows breasts, and the boy grows uneasy in her company, and nature, the way things are, breaks down the barricade they have erected against the outside. They run away from home, at her insistence, but they're found. That's the way things are, and the way they are in this fiction, the way they have to be. No faking, no horsing around. Before Millicent becomes herself, she lives on her reconstructed memories of a wonderful man she once worked for, by whose ghostly agency she regularly escaped from the reality of her family. Like all memories forced by selfish need, her memory of Mr. Spears is bogus, and finally she learns as much: "Another one of her stories, another unfelt moment." This book is a grander act of memory and fabrication, a world reconstructed from a grander kind of need, that nourishes wit and brings the peace of stubborn truth. So that it seems, at least while the book lasts, that life might indeed be equal to the measure of art, and we might all be better than we know.

MUSIC

Top Ten and Assorted Also-Rans

By Janet Maslin

Now nobody here is actually coming right out and calling these the Ten Best Pop Albums of 1974, you understand; nobody here is nervy, authoritative or fair enough to even contemplate so bold a move. No, all I'm saying is that if Fate ever saw fit to strand me and my stereo on a suitably wired desert island, these are (in order) the ten 1974 releases we'd very probably entreat the heavens to provide:

1) **Good Old Boys,** *Randy Newman.* Maybe not the most emotionally compelling album of this past year (that distinction belongs to the lady in the #2 slot), but by far the most intriguing, complex and perfectly executed effort. Bewildering and stimulating, brilliantly elusive, it undermines the listener's calm in the slyest, most unassumingly potent way. Sometimes biting, sometimes sentimental, sometimes both, it spans a range of moods whose scope is rivaled only by that of Newman's spare, controlled arrangements, which suit him better than anything else he's done thus far.

2) **Court and Spark,** *Joni Mitchell.* Endless forays into what the author describes, in her best song here, as "the same situation"; a collection of exquisitely self-indulgent love songs that, by too thoroughly reinforcing both Mitchell's and her listeners' vanity, give that vanity the lie. She has never performed or written better than she does here (though the production is sometimes unduly cluttered), nor has she more succinctly articulated the hopes, fears and self-deceptions of her audience.

3) **Fulfillingness' First Finale,** *Stevie Wonder.* It can't be fair to fault someone for consistent, indomitable genius, yet if Wonder seems close to the height of his extraordinary powers now he also seems to have reached a plateau. Experimenting with looser, more languid rhythms, he matches (yet never quite surpasses) his most inspired post-comeback works, *Innervisions* and *Talking Book.* If Wonder's admirers expect too much, his power and promise have given them ample reason.

4) **Late For The Sky,** *Jackson Browne.* This third album from the most gifted of the Angeleno roughneck-romantics retraces the steps of the first two as it settles upon a more distinct and durable ap-

proach; Browne can now indulge his urge to rock without sacrificing his eloquence, couching his gentlest insights in whimsical, fairly upbeat arrangements. A rich and subtle work, it takes its time before fully sinking in. The wait is worth it.

5) **Preservation Act 2** *The Kinks.* Their best-conceived project since 1969's *Arthur*, notable not so much for its allegorical politics as it is for forging a blowsy, big-band style to suit the group's new theatricality. Raucous yet precise, it presents the poignant world-weariness of their earlier work in a more flamboyant, more spirited and somehow even sadder light. The festive mood always borders on the desperate, and therein lies its perverse appeal.

6) **Pretzel Logic,** *Steely Dan.* Most coherent effort to date from a relatively new and highly innovative outfit. Fluid melodies hint of jazz, arrangements exude sophistication, execution is relaxedly superb throughout.

7) **Live Rhymin',** *Paul Simon.* This year's finest live album recasts Simon's material in a wholly different, more vital manner. Alone—or with South American (Urubamba) or gospel (the Jesse Dixon Singers) backing—Simon pushes himself far more than he has before, triumphing as singer rather than songwriter. His version of "Bridge Over Troubled Water" is more compelling than Aretha's, more heartfelt than Elvis', certainly more soulful than Garfunkel's.

8) **Land's End,** *Jimmy Webb.* Objectivity fails me, and words do too: I have never been able to convince anyone that the rawness of Webb's singing is what gives it such unlikely strength, or that the overripeness of his compositions can be genuinely overwhelming. Equipped with pipes better suited to plumbing than they are to the task at hand, he strains and struggles on an album as flawed as it is exhilarating and ambitious.

9) **Heart Like A Wheel,** *Linda Ronstadt.* The record on which she gets the most production and backup and help proves to be her most even and probably her best, though she never matches the intensity she's displayed in the past. No Ronstadt album comes close to capturing the electricity of her live performances, but this one succeeds in another way, accommodating the singer to the studio rather than attempting the (perhaps impossible) opposite.

10) **Starting Over,** *Raspberries.* As '60s' revivalists go, the Raspberries were first and, even after personnel changes, remain foremost. Their secret is their

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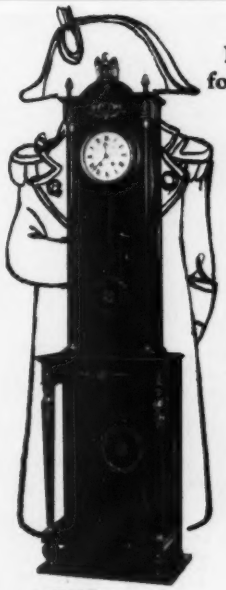

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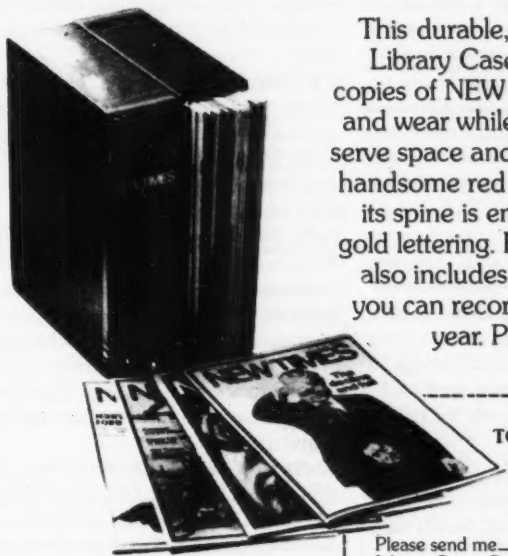

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anonymity; unhampered by any discernible personality of their own, they're free to imitate their hearts out in a way that Elton John and David Bowie (who've attempted similar things) never can be. The Beach Boys, Beatles and Who circa 1965 have never been paid a more flattering tribute than they are by this group's material, an uncanny, ebullient synthesis of the originals.

Best of the Rest. These aren't runners-up, they're noteworthy also-rans from artists too new, old or uneven to have matched the quality of any of the above. So if the heavens were kind enough to heed our initial opportuning, we'd probably press our luck and ask for (in no particular order):

Phoebe Snow. This jazzy debut from a bluesy-voiced New Yorker is currently enjoying spectacularly (and deservedly) brisk sales.

On The Border, *Eagles.* Even when they're nondescript or full of monotonous machismo, even when all they seem to care about is churning out Top-40 hits, California's foremost bar-band-made-good is never dull.

New Skin for the Old Ceremony, *Leonard Cohen.* So he'll never be a singer; he'll always be an eccentric. His best effort in four years.

Learn To Love It, *Jesse Winchester.* A mellow, tuneful Canadian who makes his latest album's title not at all implausible.

It's Only Rock and Roll, *The Rolling Stones.* Pushing both chronological and spiritual middle age, the Stones launch a newly effete sound that's no match for their better days but moderately winsome just the same.

Felix Cavaliere. Former leader of the Rascals makes his solo debut with the liveliest white dance record of the year.

Splinter. George Harrison's own performing abilities may not be what they once were, but if this harmonic duo is any indication of the caliber of his new Dark Horse label, at least his taste remains reliable.

Lucky Day, *Jonathan Edwards.* Fine live album by a thus far underappreciated folk soloist (whose second and third studio albums are even better).

Grievous Angel, *Gram Parsons.* Delicate country vocals, ably chosen material on what turned out to be a posthumous release from this former Byrd.

Black and Blue, *Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes.* Live nightclub set captures these Philadelphia singers in all their playful glory, even if the opening number is "Cabaret."

Paradise and Lunch, *Ry Cooder.* An interesting singer and superb guitarist, Cooder borrows his quintessentially American material from the best of sources. His fourth album is easily as good as the first three, and that's no mean accomplishment.

Terry Melcher. This longtime producer makes his performing debut with a voice that outdoes Jimmy Webb's for sheer audacity, an odd, original approach to the Southern California blues and his mother, Doris Day, singing sad harmonies on Jackson Browne's "These Days."

These Foolish Things, *Bryan Ferry.* English revisionist attacks and reworks American pop classics, with uneven but uniquely brazen results.

Wild Honey and 20/20, *The Beach Boys.* Anyone who doubts this is the year's worthiest reissue can meet me on lower Park Avenue—with pistols, at sunrise—to discuss the matter.

And one more thing. If the heavens were to come through with all of the above, my stereo and I would have but a single final plea: we would ask that Harry Chapin never be allowed to spoil everybody's year with an album title like *Verities and Balderdash* again.

Mitchell: exquisitely self-indulgent.

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A lament for standards that were

FINAL TRIBUTE

By Florence King

We live in a nothing-works-anymore era marked by a fatalism reminiscent of the ancient Orient, or, in our own time, the Weimar Republic. We are suffused in grateful awe when our mail finally arrives, we expect nothing of the repairmen we hire except inefficiency and rudeness, and when a piece of costly machinery self-destructs we nod with resignation and say, "That's planned obsolescence." We are used to being cheated and no longer bother to insist that anyone cut the mustard. A certain kind of faucet washer that used to cost a dime is no longer manufactured, but even if we could lay hands on one it would do us no good because it is now "necessary" to buy a whole new attachment—at a cost of seven dollars—to make a simple home repair. We docilely pay taxes for schools that do not teach our children how to read, and then just as docilely pay their tuition at private reading schools. Some such schools actually offer gift certificates—a perfect solution to the problem of what to buy the boy or girl graduate?

Singers who could not drive a plague wagon through a medieval street without going flat every time they chanted "Bring out your dead!" become million-dollar stars—with the aid of electronic engineers who piece their sad offerings together and perform bass-and-treble miracles of technology at studio dashboards filled with hundreds of knobs that no one understands but them. Is it any wonder that millions of Americans seethe nightly before their TV sets, radios and phonographs, thinking bitterly: "God, he can't sing! Why, I could sing that good."

There is no end to the madness. People drop out of college and quit their jobs to string beads, burn pictures on leather, or dislocate their shoulders at the weaving loom. Bored housewives hurl themselves at the pottery wheel in ceramics classes and make blue spittoons that look like everyone else's blue spittoons. The paint-by-the-numbers imperative is truly our latest manifest destiny.

Much has been said about the spirit of unhappiness and discontent that pervades American life. It is precisely our lack of standards that has caused the mood of inarticulate anger that we see today. People have been encouraged to forget about superior performance and excellence and no longer demand it.

It was not always so. The good old days may have been lousy in a lot of ways, but at least back then competence was held in high regard. Hell, without it there was no way anyone could succeed.

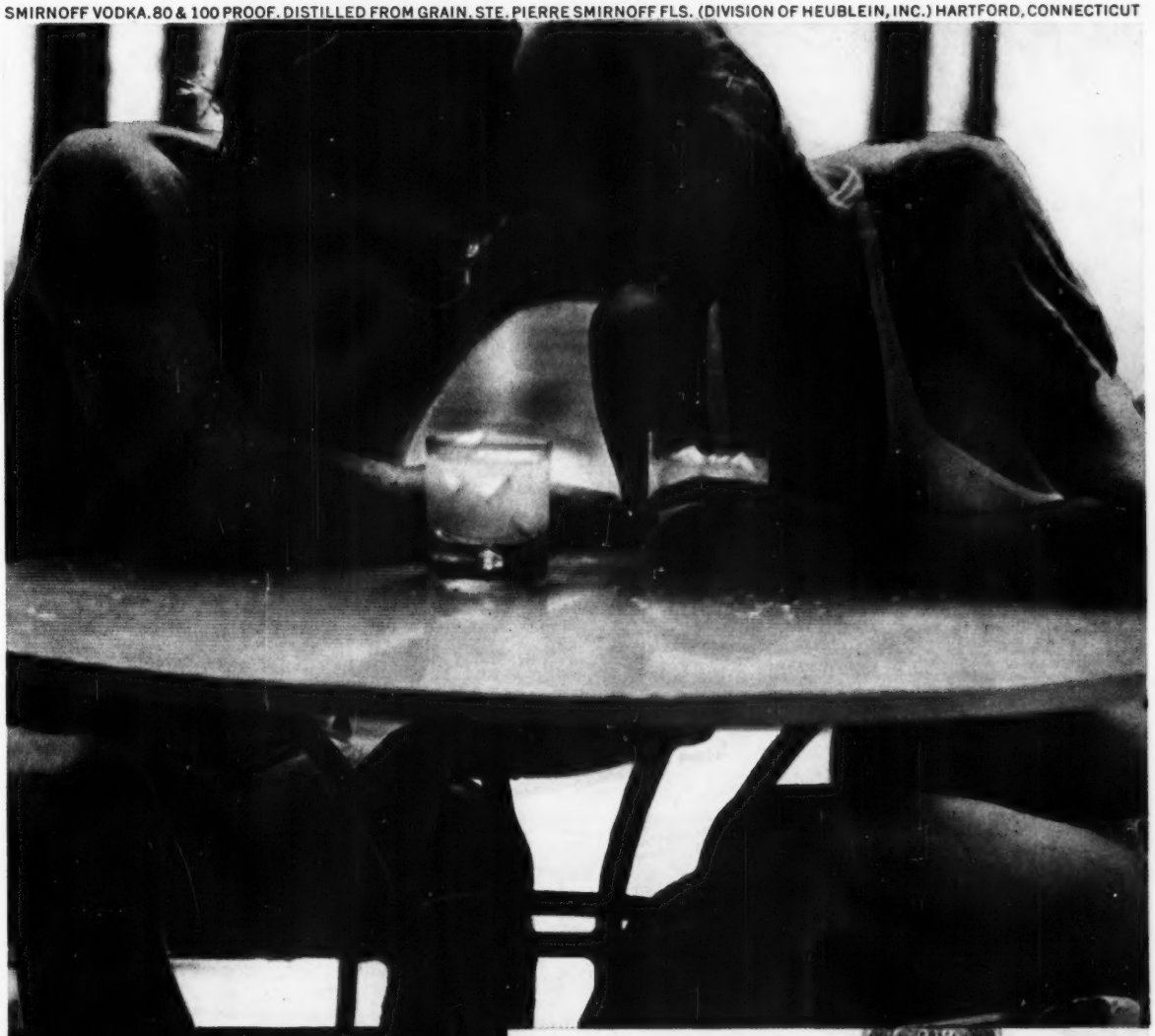
Fifty years ago, recording artists sang cold-turkey into a horn to make a wax master, and if they couldn't get it right the first time there was no earthly way to fix it up. This recording technique made a voice sound worse, not better, so singers had to be more than excellent in order to emerge as good. In live performances, a singer had to fill a hall without amplification, a demanding requirement that can tax even a good voice and render it merely loud unless that voice has been properly trained and its owner carefully schooled in the techniques of cultivation and projection. The public knew what it wanted and audiences demanded perfection. If they did not get it, the management kept handy that fine old piece of vaudeville equipment that we so desperately need today—the hook.

So this is where we find ourselves. Our once-honorable quest for equality has turned against us, attacking our vitals like a poisonous gas and leaving us perfectly comfortable with mediocrity. Each time a non-artist non-performs, he says in effect, "This is good enough for you; I don't have to do any better." We absorb indignity after tiny indignity, until all the contempt heaped upon us is internalized and changed into self-contempt.

A country that tampers with the immutable laws of human nature is destined to reap the wild wind and America has forgotten the most important of these laws: that looking up is better moral exercise than looking down. People presented with an awesome ideal tend to be idealistic. Excellence is the craftsman's gift to his public; when they accept it, they are elevated to his level. Without standards, without a craving for excellence, people cannot feel good about themselves. And ultimately, without people who feel good about themselves, no country can survive. ●

ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD EGIELSKI

SMIRNOFF VODKA. 80 & 100 PROOF. DISTILLED FROM GRAIN. STE. PIERRE SMIRNOFF FLS. (DIVISION OF HEUBLEIN, INC.) HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT



The White Elephant

(Smirnoff, white creme de cacao, m-i-l-k)

This drink is aptly named. We couldn't discuss it among ourselves without arguing. Otherwise, we'd have told you about it ages ago.

We agreed on the Smirnoff. We agreed on the creme de cacao. But was a White Elephant made with milk? About that, we couldn't agree.

So, we tested the drink both ways. The milk version won hands down. "Delicious," tasters told us, "You hardly know you're drinking liquor."

"That's why we opposed putting milk in the drink in the first place!" said the people who had opposed milk in the first place. "It goes down *too* easy."

That's a problem we hadn't faced before. This drink has 2 ozs. of liquor in it and if you don't notice it at first, you are sure to feel it later. So, hopefully you'll treat it (and yourself) with respect.

To make a White Elephant: Pour 1 oz. Smirnoff, 1 oz. white creme de cacao and 1 oz. milk into a short glass with ice. Stir.

Smirnoff
leaves you breathless®

Oh,
the disadvantages
of our
longer cigarette.
Benson & Hedges
100's
BENSON&HEDGES
100's
Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.
17 mg. "tar," 1.1 mg. nicotine,
av. per cigarette, FTC Report, Oct. '74.
Regular and Menthol